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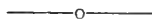
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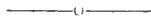
THE OÖLOGIST

FOR THE STUDENT OF

BIRDS, THEIR NESTS AND EGGS



VOLUME XXIII



ALBION, N. Y.

FRANK H. LATTIN, M. D. PUBLISHER

ERNEST H. SHORT, EDITOR AND MANAGER

1906

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THE OÖLOGIST.

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THE OÖLOGIST,

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DERMY.

FRANK H. LATTIN, Publisher,
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ERNEST H. SHORT, Editor and Manager.

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ERNEST H. SHORT, Editor and Manager,
Chill, Monroe Co., N. Y.

Green Leaves in Nest.

Green leaves, apparently for ornamental purposes, adorn the majority of Red-shouldered Hawk's nests found in this locality when the nests are not disturbed. As a rule the decorative

tendency does not develop until the eggs are advanced in incubation and is most pronounced during the last week. However, a nest found in Genesee county on April 12, 1903, containing three fresh eggs, presented a beautiful green interior the hollow being lined with "box-berry" leaves and the surrounding platform concealed beneath a profusion of spruce twigs with their covering of green needles. Not only are the leaves of various trees used but entire plants of such as night shade and violet. Have found the latter so fresh that the adhering flowers had not commenced to droop. That this trait of nest ornamentation is more or less universal with the species is indicated by Mr. Singley's statement referring to the Florida variety in Texas. He says: "This hawk has a peculiar habit of placing green leaves in the nest."

It would be interesting to know whether these leaves are placed there by the male as a tribute of regard to his mate or by his mate or a development of that feminine characteristic to adorn and fix up things. Probably the latter. Who ever heard of a man chasing a street car after he had caught it.

J. CLAIRE WOOD.

Detroit, Michigan.

J. R. Tabor, postmaster at Canfield, Ohio, reports the taking of a fine specimen of a Snowy Owl, Thursday, November 23. The owl was shot by a farmer about three miles southwest of Canfield. Mr. Tabor mounted the bird and an examination of the body



ATTACHED TO THE OLD HOME

Black-throated Blue Warbler built 1905 Nest on top of 1904 one.
Photo by E. J. Dietrick

showed that it had been hit with number 8 shot as well as number 4 shot at some previous time as the wounds made by these shot were healed up. He also found that the bird had been killed with number 1 shot. This goes to show that when a Snowy Owl comes down in this locality it has to run a gauntlet of shotguns, so to speak. Breeding, as they do, in the far north, beyond human habitation, they do not have the instinctive fear of man that birds in this locality acquire and when they come here from their northern home their conspicuous white plumage causes them to be seen by the man behind the shotgun and everyone in the neighborhood where they may be staying is trying to shoot them at every opportunity.

It is quite unusual that a Snowy Owl should come as far south as this so early in the winter, as it is supposed that they usually come into the

United States during severe winter weather or on account of unfavorable food conditions in their northern home.

In your November issue, William I. Comstock, of Norfolk, Conn., refers to the taking of a set of 5 Red-tailed Hawk's eggs in the early part of May, 1897, by W. K. Hatler, and in corroboration calls attention to a nest of the Red-shouldered Hawk which he found that had contained 5 eggs.

In connection with this I may say that in my experience of twenty-five years I have never found a set of Red-tailed Hawk's eggs with more than 2 eggs, but have known of others taking sets of 3 eggs. On the other hand my experience in full set of the Red-shouldered Hawk has shown that their sets invariably contain 3 or 4 eggs in about the same proportion as to the number of sets taken.



HUNGRY

Young Crows in Nest

Photo by W. J. English

I have, however, taken two sets of 5 eggs each of the Red-shouldered—April 23rd, 1902 and April 15th, 1903.

The fact that the set of 5 eggs taken "early in May" is rather late for the Red-tailed Hawk as their young are usually hatched by that time. I am deeply interested in this question and would very much like to know as to the identification of the bird as well as the eggs.

GEO. L. FORDYCE,
Youngstown, O.

Perkinstown, Wis.

MR. E. SHORT, Chili, N. Y.

Dear Sir:—It gives me pleasure to be of some service to you in the matter of that odd Warbler's nest of which you desire to take a photo, and get a closer description. Only allow me to remark: While in some cases which come to my observation, the double

nests of the Yellow Warbler were positively both new, that is, the same season's build, the object seeming to be to dispose of some obstacle, usually to cover a Cowbird's egg, though often I could not find any reason why an almost finished nest was over built; With this Black-throated Blue's nest it is different, for it is built on a last year's nest.

I have studied the species carefully the last two seasons, have found eight nests this last season, all nearly uniform in situation and material, and without exception each one very close to the last year's nest. I have made it a practice to find their nests year after year, by looking about the nest of last season.

This somewhat accounts for the peculiar fact that they, in their ambition to come close to their last year's nest built not only in the same clump

of trees but directly to the old nest, so furnishing a double nest. My notebook shows the full description.

On going to collect a set of Red-breasted Nuthatche June 4th, '05, in Taylor county, Wis., I followed a trail which goes about one mile from my house, along a very peaked ridge. To both sides of the trail the hill slopes very steeply for 60 feet down into the low land, somewhat swampy. This ridge is thinly grown with high poplars or aspen, while between those there is a heavy growth of balsam, hemlock and hazel, mostly the former, and so thick that it is very difficult to pass through without cutting about with a hunting axe, like a madman. This heavy growth is from 1 to 6 feet high. When passing, I heard the notes of my favorite Black-throat, which I knew from last year. I started to go and look for their last year's nest and hoped to find the new site near it when, escorted by the singing male, I saw the female flying with a piece of inner bark into the same little balsam, where they reared four little babes last year. I went my way without interfering in the least. The tenth, I went on purpose to see how they were advancing with their work. I was astonished to find the new nest finished (snugly embedded to the old one) and containing one egg. Again I visited it June 12 to find it to contain 3 fine typical eggs with large clear markings. I made up my mind to wait a few days more, and then collect set and nest as a rarity for my collection.

You will understand my suspicions when on returning to the place June 14, I listened in vain for the cheery kee-kee-kee (as I translate the note) of my little friend. I expected that something had happened. On hastening to the nest I saw the lining all pulled out of order, two or three eggs all broken up, were thrown on the

ground, also several pieces of shells were laying in the nest and only one of the fine set was spared. It lay in one of the big dry leaves that stick at the side of the nest. I searched a long time for a trace of the birds along the ridge, but in vain, no Black-throat to be heard or seen. I am entirely uncertain with what fate they met.

Well, I took the remaining egg, measured the height of the nest (it was 17 inches above the ground) cut it off and returned still reflecting what could have happened to the birds.

As you will see, the nest is built between the two pencil sized branches, the one a tiny 2-ft. high balsam fir, the other a very scanty little hemlock. It was very close to a trail used by two and four legged creatures of various kinds. The material used in constructing the nest is the inner bark of the aspen, which comes off in great quantity from dead branches. The egg I still have. It was fresh.

Yours very truly,

E. J. DIETRICH,
Perkinstown, Wis.

We give a half tone of this nest on another page. The lower, or old nest, was dark colored, flattened and weather-worn, and the new nest easily distinguished.

The dark line in the picture shows the juncture of the two nests.

The nest was probably disturbed by Red Squirrels, who are the usual marauders in these cases.

It is not uncommon for Robins to build on top of old nests and many Swallows, Hawks and Crows reline and use old nests, but our smaller song birds rarely do this. One of the rarest instances I remember was a Redstart's nest in a deserted Vireo's nest.—Editor.

Mr. C. F. Stone, of Yates, N. Y., reports two nests of Ruby-throat Hummer built on remains of last year's nests.

Brandt's Cormorant.

On June 1, 1902, Mr. J. B. Lewis and myself made a trip to the coast after eggs of birds of that locality and more particularly after eggs of Brandts and Farrallone Cormorants. Mr. Lewis came up from home (Pet-aluma) in the morning and after dinner we started out for the coast, or to be more particular, Bodega Bay, which is 24 miles west and south of Santa Rosa. My time was limited to the next Wednesday evening. We went prepared to camp out. After 4 hours drive up hill and down hill over a very rough road we arrived at the Bay about 5 o'clock and proceeded to pitch our tent and make ourselves comfortable. We were camped at the head of the bay, or at the north end, and the tide came up to within 25 or 30 feet of our tent. We expected to go out early Monday to an island off the mouth of the bay about three-fourths of a mile from the main land, for the Brandts Cormorant, and I had previously made arrangements with Mr. Blue, on whose place we were camped, to engage a boatman, but after we had arrived at the bay, we learned that the boatman had left Sunday p. m. with a load of fish for Santa Rosa and we had passed him on the road. So it was all off going out to the island the next morning. He was to be at home Monday p. m. so we arranged to put in the time hunting for sets of the land birds, and during the day found many sets of Song Sparrow, Gold-finches, House-finches set. I noticed that there were a great many unfinished nests and we found all of 20 to 30 nests of different kinds with 1, 2 and 3 eggs in, which we did not disturb, seeing that they were not full sets.

We had taken our lunch with us when we left camp and it was about 4:30 when we arrived at our camp.

As we drove in from the main road towards our camp there was a party drove up just behind us and stopped to camp near us. That night we made a camp fire and some half dozen of the inhabitants of Bodega gathered around with us. The two gentlemen of the party that had just made camp joined us. We learned their names to be Graham, from Racaville on a camping trip, also soon found out that the son was an egg collector. From one of the party we learned that our boatman had not arrived yet.

So we began to discuss means as to how we were to get out to the island the next day. One of the residents of the bay, a boatman, also offered to take us out to the island for \$2.50, which offer we readily accepted, and arranged to start at 7 o'clock. Mr. Graham, Jr. was invited to go with us. About nine o'clock the company broke up and we crawled into our tent to sleep. On awakening the next morning we found that the wind was blowing so hard that we knew that we could not make the trip that day. The bay is 3 miles long and 2 miles wide and in most places 3 to 5 feet deep at low tide, with a very crooked, narrow, and deep channel, through which the current runs like a mill race when the tide is either coming in or going out. It is a very dangerous trip to make out to the island in a small boat and even the natives never attempt it only under very favorable circumstances. It is safe enough with a large boat, but the trouble is you can't land only with a small boat, on the island. After giving up the trip to the island for that day also, there was nothing for us to do but to hunt for more of the land birds.

We found more sets of Song Sparrow, Goldfinches, etc., and in a low place where the tide came in between two small hills, it was over-

grown with tule, here we found Red-wing Blackbirds nesting, and about 100 yards back from the road on this same piece of ground, were six or eight willows growing. Young Graham had passed that place just ahead of me, and when I first looked through the trees I could see nothing but soon located three nests of Brewers Blackbirds in one of the trees. I called to the others to come. In the first tree I climbed I was rewarded with two very fine sets 2, 4 of Brewers, the other nest only having one egg. Altogether we got fourteen sets from these trees, not counting the nest of 1, 2, or 3 eggs in, which we left undisturbed. We worked back towards camp but found nothing of interest and put in the balance of the day and evening in eating and sleeping and telling bird stories. On waking at 5 o'clock Wednesday morning I got up and took a look around. The bay was as smooth as a mill pond and tide favorable. We hurried with our breakfast and prepared for our trip to the island, as it was our last day and last chance, as I had to be at home that night. When we were ready we loaded egg cases, baskets, buckets and lunch into the wagon and drove to the landing, Messrs. Graham, father and son, the boatman and his helper and myself being the ones to go out, Mr. Lewis not feeling well, and staying at home to look out for the camps. It was a hard pull of over an hour across the bay, and the wind coming up as the sun rose higher. We made the mouth of the bay and across the bar, then followed close to the shore under the lee of a high bluff between us and the ocean on the other side for one-half mile before coming to the open ocean. From the main land to the island it was three-fourths of a mile of open water and when we got full benefit of the large rollers. In going this last three-quar-

ters of a mile we began to notice more birds about, Pigeon Guillemots, Cormorants and Gulls and as we neared the island we could see the whole surface of the rocks covered over with Cormorant and a few Gulls.

We made for the leeward side of the island to make a landing. In fact, it was the only place where we could land, as the only beach where we could land was on that side, and was about 16 to 20 feet long and about 10 feet wide, just enough to land a small boat. When 20 yards or so from the landing place we felt the swells the most, and it was ticklish business to keep the boat from striking the small rocks that showed themselves when the swells were lowest. We made the landing place O. K. though and three of us jumped out onto the beach into the water nearly waist deep and held the boat while the other two of the party unloaded the boxes, baskets out onto the rocks. We then pushed the boat out into the water and the boatman rowed out about 50 yards from the island, away from the rocks. We then, each one of us picked up as much of our traps as we could carry and climbed up to the flat part of the island about 10 feet from the water line. While we were landing the birds had taken wing and were circling around us uttering their shrill cries and when we reached the top of the island we found that there were as many more standing near their nests and looking at us as though they were wondering what our intrusion meant.

My, but what a sight! nests only a foot or so apart, covered the whole island, where the rocks were flat enough to hold a nest. We placed our boxes, baskets, etc., together in a pile and walked around between the nests, taking in the sights before beginning to gather the eggs. The nests were built up of sea weed and

like material, about five inches high outside. The inside was 3 1-2 to 4 inches deep and 8 or 9 inches across top.

There were fresh eggs, incubated eggs, eggs that were just hatched, some nests of all young, some young half-grown, some nearly ready to look out for themselves—all Cormorants. Some of the sets were of four eggs, some of five eggs and one set I got of six eggs, two of which were somewhat incubated. Some of the sets contained runts and others had abnormally large ones. After tiring of looking around we got to work gathering. I placed my egg case in a favorable locality (the egg case was a regular shipping case for shipping hen's eggs), and started in. I began filling and left a blank space in the fillers between each set, and only took such sets that I knew could be blown. I was careful enough to gather in all the sets with runts and abnormally large eggs first. It took me just about one-half hour to fill my case of 360 eggs, less the blank spaces. As soon as the others were ready we signalled the boatman to come in with the boat. We had the cases nailed up and down on the rocks ready for him when he got the boat in where we could reach it. We held it as when landing while the others loaded everything on board. When all was ready, the boatman and his helper at the oars, we watched our chance and as a heavy swell was receding, we went out with it and before another one came we were out of danger of the rocks. We made straight for the bluff on the main land again, and getting on leeward side of same, we made a landing and Young Graham and myself got out and made our way up to the top of the bluff and to the other side towards the ocean. On the shelves overlooking we found a number of sets of eggs of Farrallone Cor-

morant. The nest of this bird is similar but larger and the eggs are larger and usually more oblong than those of Brandts. These sets we marked and placed in a small hand basket. After leaving the bluff we followed the top of the ridge of sand hills, then made our way down to the edge of the bay and followed the beach around the bay until we reached a point opposite the landing, where we waited until the boat came up to ferry us across. On reaching the landing we carried our baskets, etc. up to the store and left them until we passed on our way home. We paid the boatman and went to camp where Mr. Lewis had dinner nearly ready, as it was now about 1 o'clock. After dinner we packed our belongings into the wagon and started for home, and as we passed the store, we picked up our eggs and bid everybody good bye.

We made a quick trip home, only stopping once about one-half the way to water our horse, and while waiting there a couple of ladies drove by in a buggy, and seeing the egg cases, stopped and asked the price of eggs, thinking we were peddling hen fruit, of course. Mr. Lewis had to explain that they were not the kind of eggs that they would want, so they drove on, with a puzzled expression on their faces, which seemed to say, they could not see what anyone would want with sea bird's eggs.

I had looked forward to this trip for Cormorant eggs for some time and devised a blower to blow them that would lessen the work of blowing. It was made thus: I first took an extra blow pipe and cut off about 2 1-2 inches of the large end, then I took a coupling from a piece of garden hose, had a flat piece of brass soldered to the same, then punched a round hole in the center of same inserted the blowpipe through this a rubber washer in the coupling part

and screwing onto a faucet over a sink in my basement I had a good strong water blower, which could be made strong or easy as desired, by simply turning on or turning off the water as desired, and I found it a great help in blowing these large size eggs.

Respt. yours,

H. F. DUPREY,

Santa Rosa, Cal.

IN REVIEW.

"Prehistoric Relics," by Prof. W. K. Moorhead. As stated in the preface, this is intended simply for a handbook for collectors and beginners in Archaeology and in nowise attempts to cover an extensive or technical field for professionals or museum work.

The descriptive text and plates occupy 153 pages and as there are 146 of the plates alone, many of which are full page, (one figures 70 types), the text is necessarily much abridged. There are sixteen chapters treating of different forms of relics, according to their uses as far as possible. Some, like that on Bicaves, etc., are quite exhaustive, while others, as the one on Shell and Bone Implements, are abridged to a regrettable extent, though necessary, of course, owing to the limits of the work.

For the illustrations, we have only words of praise. Printed from fine cuts, many loaned by public institutions for the purpose, on good paper, they are on a scale large enough to be of great practical value to anyone forming a collection.

The chapter on unclassified forms does small justice to this subject of predominant interest in Archaeology. I suppose want of space forbids. The writer remembers a find of W. N. Y. Hoes, Spades, and Spatulas of uncertain classification that would fall under no types mentioned.

The pamphlet which the Andover Press sends out with the work gratis, entitled "The Field Diary of an Arch-

aological Collector," by Prof. Moorehead, is the biggest surprise. Issued in 1902, some of our readers may have seen it. The Editor had not, so opened a copy and essayed to gather an idea of its contents. Result—He read every word in the 71 pages (7x11) and met a succession of surprises in the amount of valuable information contained in the record of explorations and experiences among the ancient mound builders of the Ohio Valley, the Indians of the Pine Ridge, and the Cliff Dweller ruins of the Southwest.

Altogether, it is interesting, instructive and well worth a large part of the dollar asked for the two books.

ERNEST H. SHORT.

"Bird Guide," by C. A. Reed. Part 2. "Land Birds East of the Rockies" is at hand. The work is not intended for an Ornithological text book, but as a handy pocket guide for bird lovers and students who have not time or the inclination to go into Ornithology technically. Looking back into my childhood, I can remember when this little volume would have been worth many times the 50 cents asked for it.

Of course, all the colors do not appear on many, neither is the shade of color right in many instances. We could hardly expect that in a work at this price.

The text is big value for the money. Not only a short description of the bird accompanies the cut, but also something of its habits, song, call, notes, nest and eggs, range and subspecies.

As is usually the case, a critic, who has closely studied bird songs will find much to take exception to in the description of many songs and calls. They are difficult to describe and vary much.

The nesting sites given are in most cases too abbreviated to be of much value and in some cases positively misleading as with Hooded and Wilson's Warblers, for example.

Editor.

Publications Received.

Am. Ornithology, Vol. V, No. 12; The Trader, Vol. I, No. 6-7; Photographic Times, XXXVII, No. 12; Nature Study, XIV, No. 12; "West," Vol. XXXI, No. 2.

THE OÖLOGIST.

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION DEVOTED TO
OOLOGY, ORNITHOLOGY AND TAXIDERM.Y.

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Brief Special announcements "Wants," "Exchanges," "For Sales," inserted in this department for 25 cents per 25 words. Notices over 25 words charged at the rate of 1-2 cent for each additional word. No notice inserted for less than 25 cents. Terms, cash with order. Strictly first-class specimens will be accepted in payment at 1-3 list rates.

VOL. XXIII. No. 2. ALBION, N. Y., FEBRUARY, 1906. WHOLE No. 223

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223	your subscription expires with this issue	
233	"	Dec., 1906
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Last spring I purchased the entire stock of birds eggs owned by Chas. K. Reed, of Worcester, Mass., and in the following August I purchased the magnificent private collection of Mr. A. E. Kibbe, of Mayville, N. Y. I am reserving a few sets of each species for my private collection and the residue, consisting of thousands of specimens, I have no use for and will exchange for sets new to my collection or will sell at the following very low rates. A rare opportunity for schools, museums, etc., to secure desirable material right.

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THE OÖLOGIST.

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THE OÖLOGIST,

A Monthly Publication Devoted to
OOLOGY, ORNITHOLOGY AND TAXIDERMISTRY.

FRANK H. LATTIN, Publisher,
ALBION, N. Y.

ERNEST H. SHORT, Editor and Manager.

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ERNEST H. SHORT, Editor and Manager,
Chilli, Monroe Co., N. Y.

More About Those Green Leaves.

In the January number I noticed an article entitled, "Green Leaves in Nest." This placing of green leaves has always attracted my attention in the Red-shouldered Hawk's nests

about Eastern Massachusetts, and it has often caused a good deal of speculation on the part of several of my friends and myself.

As Mr. Wood mentions the greater part of this green leaf lining is placed in the nest in the advanced stages of incubation, and that, together with the greater or less amount of down adhering to the nest, always gives me a very good idea of the freshness of the eggs. In fact, I seldom climb a tree when I can detect some down or a green leaf or two with my glasses, as the chances are that the nest is either not inhabited or has not a complete set.

I have never seen a Hawk in the act of placing any leaves in the nest, nor plucking them from the tree, but I have noticed a very peculiar variation in the nest lining in reference to the species of tree the nest is placed in. Now, for example, when the tree is placed in a hard wood grove, the leaves are most always taken from the oak, and when in a hemlock tree, the green lining is almost invariably hemlock twigs. Then, again, when the nest is in a maple tree the nest seldom has any green lining of any kind.

Now, the conclusion that I have drawn is not that the bird has any sense of the beautiful, but more an inborn desire to have the nest well lined for the chicks that are soon to hatch. Thus, as the Hawk, male or female, is lazily basking in the sun, or just returned from a hunt in Pimeas just returned from the hunt it is seized with the inspiration of nest building, a most natural one during the incu-

bation period, and on looking about for something soft and within easy reach, the leaves of the tree in which the bird is perched on and which is generally the home tree or very near to it, is the first thing that presents itself.

Thus it is that a nest in a hemlock tree is lined with hemlock twigs, in an oak with oak leaves, and as the maple tree's leaves are very small at this time, they are disregarded and replaced by cedar bark and the like.

This is the experience that I have had with the birds in my section and I don't doubt that this habit of lining the nest with green leaves varies individually and geographically, but as far as the birds having any sense of the beautiful, I am inclined to think that, that belongs to a higher level, which the bird has not reached.

L. BROOKS,

Milton, Mass.

The Mexican Horned Lark.

(*Otocoris alpestris chrsolaema*.)

There was a time, not more than four or five years ago, when I was not acquainted with this plentiful resident of Southern California hills and valleys, but since I have come to know it better, it has risen considerable in my respect, until I have come to regard it as one of the most interesting members of the avifauna of the southwest.

Small and gray-brown is its dress, the Mexican Horned Lark is seldom seen until one almost steps upon it, crouching in the dead grasses of the mesa, or flushes it excitedly from some well hidden nest, planted squarely in the place you would never in the wide world think of looking for it. I remember seeing the nest of one of these birds—at least it was the nest of one of the ground larks, and I suppose of this species—while I was on my trip

through Death Valley some three years ago. In this part of the desert there is a cactus which grows in the form of small rounded heads. Its method of multiplying itself is for the young plants to come up from the root of the old one and in a perfect circle round about it. As soon as the young attain any size the mother plant dies down, thus leaving an empty space in the center of the miniature wall of heads. In such a place as this, I found the nest of one of these birds, composed almost entirely of hair gathered from the stables where the mules belonging to the borax companies were kept. Nothing could possibly get at them, as it was with the greatest difficulty that I reached down and lifted out the nest and one addled egg (the time was November), which it contained.

All around on the desert floor bands of the birds played and chirped in the glorious fall weather that overlies all the southwest desert each year—probably some of them had been hatched from this nest—and in the nesting season, they must be even more plentiful here than on the seaward side of the range where there are plenty of them, to say the least.

In nesting on the settled slopes of the west, the larks usually seek the higher mesas, though some few breed each year in the alkali plains that border the sea coasts. Such birds as have been living for years in the lowlands seem to be lighter in color than those of the hill regions. This may be only imagination, for I never shot any of these little fellows, or it may well be that the years among the alkali flats may have so dusted their coats that they remain whiter than those that dust themselves in the pulverized 'dobe of the upper slopes. Sometimes one of these larks makes up her mind to occupy some vineyard or orchard, and selects the hollow at the base of a vine or tree for her

home. Some times this is lined with fine grasses or hair; more often it is practically unlined and the eggs lie on the soft dust which the bird has scratched loose for this purpose. In such a nest as this, the collector will find, nine times out of ten, at least, three eggs. Rarely four are laid, and I have heard of one set of five—which may possibly have been the product of two females. I suppose I have examined something like two hundred sets of eggs of this bird, (mostly in the collections of other oologists) during the years since I came to take an interest in the lark, and have never seen a set of more than four. Indeed, there are as many full sets of two as of four.

These eggs are like those of the rest of the family that I have seen in general outline and plan of markings, though there are usually minor differences of shade and spotting, which none but an interested collector would notice. I have sets from three or four of the other species of horned larks found in North America which I have very lately obtained, and some of which are easily distinguishable from sets of *chrysolæma* in my cabinet, while others seem to be identical species. Southern and middle-western eggs are more nearly like those from this section than are those of northern and eastern birds. A comparison of a large series would doubtless be of interest, but the eggs of any and all the larks seem to be very hard to obtain—at least this has been the case with me.

The nesting time of the larks in this latitude is as variable as that of the sparrows that frequently breed in much the same sort of country. I have seen full-fledged young in March, April, May, June and July. Eggs have been taken in this county in January, but the most common time for collectors hereabouts to go

afield after the little gray eggs is in March. If the spring is "early" of course one must take time by the forelock a bit and get out betimes if he expects to get fresh eggs. The saving of an incubated lark's egg is a job for a Job, for the shells are like wet paper in their tenderness, indeed, the fresh eggs are hard enough to save without adding the difficulties of age.

HARRY H. DUNN.

I found the Bluebird is picking holes in **very**, very soft maples in the swamps here. I found two sets of blue eggs and one set of Albino eggs, all in this way. The holes were all newly picked.

I never got in such a family of Yellow Warblers as I did this summer. Yellow Warbler's nests were so thick I couldn't count them.

What would you call the set of Cuckoos with two of the Black-billed and one of the Yellow-billed; also one egg of the Black-billed and two of the Yellow-billed?

E. S. COOMBS.

These mixed Cuckoo sets are somewhat common. Have seen several this season.—Editor.

Holboell's Grebe in Philadelphia County, Penn.

By RICHARD F. MILLER.

On February 10th, 1904, my uncle, Mr. Albert Miller, captured on his farm at Sandiford, this county, amid the celery bank, a female Holboell's Grebe (*Colymbus holboellii*).

It was not easily captured, being unwounded, and ran surprisingly fast for such an ungainly bird, incessantly screaming as it ran.

Uncle confined it in the large hog-head (used to wash truck in) in the truck shed, where it lived for four days. It refused meat, worms, and all sorts of vegetable food. Streams

all being frozen with thick ice it was impossible to procure its natural food—fish—and it died of starvation.

In some unknown manner it was compelled to alight upon the ground, probably driven during a recent storm, and as is well known, these birds when once on the ground, are powerless to rise.

Uncle's farm is about a quarter of a mile from the nearest stream—the Pennypack Creek—for which the Grebe was evidently making when driven to the ground.

He gave me the bird and it is now mounted in my collection, the rarest bird that I have from Philadelphia county.

Stone in his book, "Birds of Eastern Penn. and N. J.," mentions this species as an occasional winter transient (page 31) in the vicinity of Philadelphia. Since the publication of his excellent book but one capture has been recorded from this vicinity. This specimen was shot in 1894 at River-ton, N. J. (See Cassinia for 1903, page 44).

My specimen is the only record of its occurrence in Philadelphia county that I have been able to find.

It was mounted by Mr. Edwin C. Axe, the well-known Frankford, Philadelphia taxidermist, who has hunted and collected birds in this vicinity for 50 years. He informed me that it was the first one he had ever seen.

All gunners who have been interviewed for information regarding the water birds of this locality, report having never shot the species.

Holboell's Grebe then, is a rare winter visitant in this county, instead of an occasional transient.

Dec. 28, 1904.

Philadelphia, P.

The Yellow-bellied Woodpecker in Michigan.

J. B. Purdy in "The Red-headed and other Woodpeckers in Michigan in Winter" (Auk, Vol. XVIII, P. 174) states that the Yellow-bellied Woodpecker or Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*) is the only member of the family (Picidae) that should not be protected by law. From personal observation I am inclined to differ. He states that this species makes its appearance in April, but I have on two occasions seen it during the winter. I shot one while in the act of eating grubs of which its stomach was full. Of all the birds of this species which I have at different times observed, I have never seen it drinking sap, although it is well known that this furnishes a large portion of its diet.

F. E. L. Beal of the U. S. Department of Agriculture has probably given more light on this subject than anyone in "Some Common Birds in their Relation to Agriculture," in which he states: "It has been customary to speak of the smaller Woodpeckers as sapsuckers under the belief that they drill holes in the bark for the purpose of drinking the sap and eating the inner bark. Close observation, however, has fixed this habit upon one species, the Yellow-bellied Woodpecker or Sapsucker. This bird has been shown to be guilty of pecking holes in the bark of various forest trees, and sometimes in that of apple trees, from which it drinks the sap when the pits become filled."

"It has been proved, however, that besides taking the sap, the bird captures large numbers of insects which are attracted by the sweet fluid, and that these form a very considerable portion of its diet. In some cases the trees are injured by being thus punctured, and die in a year or two.

but since comparatively few are touched, the damage is not great.

"It is equally probable, moreover, that the bird compensates for this injury by the insects it consumes. These birds are certainly the only agents which can successfully cope with certain insect enemies of the forest, and to some extent, of fruit trees, also," speaking of the woodpeckers in general. "For this reason, if no other, they should be protected in every possible way." For my part I believe that if there is a bird-heaven the *Sphyrapicus varius* will be admitted.

ALEX. W. BLAIN, Jr.

Detroit, Mich.

More Barn Owls in West. New York.

Waterport, N. Y.

In looking over the July Oologist, I find an article by Mr. Posson regarding the Barn Owl in Orleans, Niagara, Erie and Yates counties, etc., and stating that he would like to hear of other records (if any) through your paper, so I will add another.

In September, 1903, I mounted a Barn Owl, shot by Mr. George Ackerson in his orchard, two miles north of Gasport, Niagara county, and in examining the stomach I found five small mice almost whole and eight skulls and other parts of full grown mice, thirteen in all. A very generous meal I thought.

Since I wrote you about the Barn Owl I had a fine male brought to me which I bought. A fellow saw it sitting on a weed and killed it with a stick, about one mile south of Kenyonville, Oct. 30th, 1905.

A. T. GARRETT.

Surely an Owl with 13 mice in her stomach should not stand in need of any monograph by the agricultural department for the protection of the species.—Ed.

(*Strix Practincola.*)

The American Barn Owl in Chautauqua County.

I was very much interested with Mr. C. F. Posson's article on the American Barn Owl and will, as he requests, give the record of one being taken in Chautauqua county, on September 15, 1894. A Barn Owl was sent me from the city of Jamestown, where it was shot, 22 miles from Mayville, the county seat, to be mounted.

I mounted it on September 16, and it is now in my collection, as the party never called for it. It was pronounced by the best authority they had in the city to be a cross between the Hawk and Owl, and was not identified until it reached me. The bird was in fine plumage and made a nice and rare specimen for Chautauqua county. Measurements as follows:

Length, 15 in., wing 13 in., extent 41-50; tail, 5-50; male bird.

ALMON E. KIBBE,

Mayville, N. Y.

To the Ornithologists of Illinois.

Greeting:—

This great state of Illinois has no Ornithologist's Club, therefore, why not organize such a club, to be composed of bird students and those interested?

The Ornithologists of Illinois are few in numbers but nevertheless, they are enthusiastic workers and their co-operation would be a great benefit, both to man and the birds.

No other state in the Union is better adapted to the study of birds than Illinois. By organizing an Ornithologists' Club within its borders those interested would meet and become better acquainted with of us who know each other by the hand writing only, would meet and receive

the welcome hand that one bird-lover always extends to another.

There are many things which we could discuss with profit, far too many to try to enumerate them here.

Are you willing to meet with those interested in the cause some time within the present year, help organize a club and be an active member?

May I not hear from you at once, stating when you could meet with us and where you would prefer to have the meeting, that we may accommodate the greatest number possible.

Ornithologically yours,

SIDNEY S. S. STANSELL,
Tonica, Ill.

An Albino Set of Tufted Titmouse.

On May 11, 1905, while returning from a successful day's collection trip, I noticed a hole in an old hickory stump on the edge of a clearing. Examination revealed a Tufted Titmouse on nest. She sat so closely I was obliged to remove her with my hand, and on doing so was very much surprised to see a set of eight pure white eggs.

This is the only Albino set of this species I have ever taken, and I am interested in knowing if any readers have taken similar sets.

These eggs were nearly all the same size, and averaged .75x.54 in.

Incubation was advanced so that large holes were necessary in all except two, which were infertile.

GEO. H. COLLINS.

Missouri.

Editorial Notes.

Reference in January issue to C. F. Stone should have been Yates Co., not Yates, N. Y.

C. N. Davis, of Branchport, N. Y., reports an unspotted set of four Scarlet Tanager.

Paul Whistler, of West Haven, Conn., writes that on January 19th, '06, he found a Screech Owl's nest in a hollow apple tree containing four young.

We had a warm January in the East this year, but the thermometer was 4 degrees below zero when this arrived.

R. H. S., Erie, Pa.—Bird sent for identification is the Tree Sparrow. They are found in the United States only in winter dress and may be known by the brownish black spot in center of breast with yellow on lower beak.—Ed.

Huntingburg, Ind.,

Apr. 30, 1904.

W. H. Bingaman, Algona, Iowa.

Dear Sir:—I see in an old "Oologist" that you desire a set of Woodcock eggs. I have a set of 1-4 which I took last year in Illinois. The eggs are very small, about the size of a Blue Jay's, or a little larger, but are typically marked. Will sell the set for \$1.50 cash, or for a set of 1-4 Horned Owl. They are first-class with data. They are exactly as described and if you care for them, send by return mail.

yours,
L. E. MILLER.

To the Readers of the Oologist.

Last fall I received from one L. E. Miller, Huntingburg, Ind., a set of Runt Amer. Woodcock eggs. These eggs were supposed to be perfect in preparation, etc. I gave him some good sets in exchange for them, but

on arrival of his eggs, I found one to have a badly chipped hole and much caked yolk adhering on inside from not being perfectly rinsed. Now, I am an "easy mark," it seems, because I listed a number of sets to our genial manager, Mr. Short, and among them 3 runt singles of Amer. Woodcock.

Well, I sent them on, the whole set with data, and what do you think they proved to be? Eggs of the rare Meadow Lark. Of course, this L. E. Miller was very, very much surprised that his identification could be so much at fault.

I refused to have any more of Miller's sets until Mr. Short passed judgment on them.

What does he do now? Why to make it "square," he sends to Mr. Short for me a "phoney" set of Violet-green Cormorant, four eggs of Common Tern for Plover and a set of Field Sparrow and labelled them Western Chipping Sparrow.

And he isn't the only one that ought to be chased to the "overgrown woodlands" either.

Cordially yours,

W. H. BINGAMAN.

To the Members of the Oologist's Protective Committee.

This matter of what shall be done with Mr. Miller has been on my mind for over a year.

Over a year ago he sent me a set of Common Blue Jay as Canada Jay, taken by one Dr. Boyde in Assiniboia.

While I was debating the matter, Friend Price, of Grant Park, Ill., got data from him for set of Pac. Loon, collected by this same Dr. Boyde on the Pac. coast of British America, within two days of date given for my set of Jay. The distance between Moose Jaw and Victoria is 1162 miles and the Canadian Pacific passenger

train takes 2 days and 13 hours to make it.

Putting this together with some similar evidence of Mr. Price's, I conclude that "Dr. Boyde" skips around the world on the tip of Miller's pencil faster than our best express trains.

Next came to hand a n egg of Nighthawk, bearing data on one of Miller's blanks in his handwriting as "Poorwill," collected by Smith, Bluff, Miss.

As this could only catch the veriest dunce anyway, I did not follow it up. Then the set of "Runt Woodcock" came to hand from Bingaman. They were not odd but typical eggs of Meadow Lark.

I have been all summer working at this. Result, Bingaman has the set of Meadow Lark, I have the rare lot of stuff as per correspondence.

E. H. SHORT.

Opinion of A. E. Price, Grant Park, Ill.:

I had been warned against Miller and when I received his list I purposely sent him a good list and selected four sets from widely separated places, asking him to send me the data for examination. They came and while in very different writing, one could easily see that all were written by Miller himself. I told him so and he then claimed that the ones he sent me were not the originals, but if so, why should he seek to disguise his hand in any case. He told me he had a single without data of Poorwill. I never saw any of his eggs.

My opinion is that while he is too green to take in an advanced collector that his intentions are simply A. 1, and that as a protection to the young collectors Mr. Bingaman's letter should be published in the Oologist, together with such statements

and explanations as Mr. Short might add.

A. E. PRICE.

PHILO W. SMITH, Jr., and CHAS. S. THOMPSON, concurring.

I regret that lack of space forbids printing the opinions of the other two members of the committee. Mr. Thompson's was specially interesting in its side lights on the subject.

We all make mistakes and this matter is not published because the set of Woodcock were typical Meadow Lark, but on account of the unsatisfactory settlements attempted and the bearing of several other matters involved, which would seem to indicate a continued intention to defraud. Our committee believes in allowing everyone the benefit of all doubts and insist that it is every one's privilege to straighten up matters of this kind without publication, even when in some cases, as Mr. Thompson says, "an innocent person is involved to his discomfort, and some times to his inconvenience and discredit, when, he is, in fact, entirely innocent."

However, we feel that this much is necessary to protect others.

ERNEST H. SHORT,

Chairman "Oologist Protective Com.

Publications Received.

Journal of the Maine Ornithological Society, Vol. VII, No. 4, contains an interesting article on duck shooting with some conclusions on magazine guns, which we heartily agree with, by F. T. Noble, and the "Notes on Maine Warblers" is continued by O. W. Knight, B. S., treating the Life History of the Myrtle Warbler at length.

We are informed by the Editor that the abridgement in size is caused by lack of funds, and trust that the society may secure financial aid at

once that there may be no excuse for a discontinuance.

"The Condor," Vol. VII, No. 6, is unusually full of good things too numerous to mention and beautifully illustrated.

We would call special attention to the article on Costa Rican Collecting, by Prof. Ridgeway and the descriptions of two new subspecies, i. e., Pacific Nighthawk, *Ch. v. hesperis*, by Jos. Grinnell, and Mountain Towhee, *P. M., megalonyx*, by H. S. Swarth.

Mr. Swarth's remarks on the value of the subspecies *P. M. atratus*, are in accord with our opinion and we think with Dr. Dwight and other prominent Ornithologists, that the hairsplitting has gone far enough.

Condor, Vol. VIII, No. 1; Photographic Times, Vol. XXXVIII, Nos. 1 and 2; Am. Ornithology, Vol. VI, No. 1 and 2; "The West," Vol. XXXI, No. 3.



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Santa Monica, Cal.

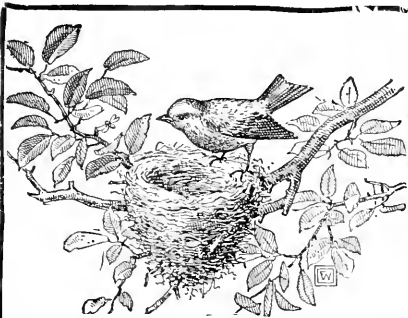
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FRANK H. LATTIN,
Albion, N. Y.

EXCHANGE OR SALE

fine Sets. In addition to the takes of my own collectors in Raptores, etc., I have just added to my collection the splendid collection of Rev. J. M. Carroll, of Waco, Texas, (1200 sets) together, with cabinets, good will, etc.—the series.

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ALBION, N. Y., MARCH, 1906.

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THE OÖLOGIST,

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Unusual Nesting Site of *Zenaidura Macroura*.

In the April number of the Oologist I read with considerable interest, the article by Mr. A. W. Blain, of Detroit, Mich., regarding the nesting of the Carolina Dove (*zenaidura macroura*)

upon the ground, and wish to record a similar find from this locality, North Philadelphia county.

On May 10, 1902, at Bustleton, while walking through a field, a dove flushed from her nest several yards ahead of me and ran with drooping wings, as if she was crippled. It was a clever ruse to entice me from the nest, but it didn't deceive me. After chasing the bird to see what she would do, and causing her to fly to a tree, on border of a wood, I came back and hunted for the nest, which I soon found.

It was placed on a brick pile that was overgrown with tall grass and weeds about a foot up, well hidden by the thick foliage and only ten feet from a railroad. It contained two fresh eggs, which I collected, and would also have taken the nest but it was such a poorly made affair that it fell apart when removed from its site. It was composed of weeds and grass stems and was six inches in outside diameter, four inches inside; depth outside, 1 1-4 inches; inside, about 1 5-8 inches. These measurements were taken before I removed the nest. The eggs are clear white in color, elliptical-ovate in shape, and in size they measure 1.09 x .88, 1.04 x .88 inches.

Both of the birds remained in a group of young willows nearby, while I was robbing the nest. One frequently cooed and flew from tree to tree.

There were woods of all description near for the birds to nest, and why they chose this one is a mystery best known to the birds.

RICHARD F. MILLER,
Philadelphia, Pa.



Double Nest of Dickeissel. Photo by Hess.

See article in this number.

Few Notes About a Common Bird, Etc.

In the August number of the Oologist, Mr. Morris Gibbs, in his instructive article, "The Nesting of the Birds," states that he does not know of any species of birds in the Great Lake region that annually rears three broods of young in one season.

In Southeastern Pennsylvania, the ubiquitous Sparrow annually rears three broods of young in one season, some times four, and frequently five and more broods. The Song Sparrow some times though rarely rears three broods. Among the birds that always rear two broods here are the Indigo Bunting, Catbird, Robin, Bluebird, Field Sparrow, House Wren, etc. I have seen young Indigo Buntings in early September that could hardly fly and some only two-thirds fledged.

The ubiquitous Sparrow is a brave and fearless bird, even if he is somewhat of a nuisance. During my collecting experience I have found them nesting in many strange and curious places, but the strangest place, and one nobody would have believed they would select is beneath railroad bridges of the P. R. R., the New York division. I have found many of their nests containing eggs and young. As many as sixty and more trains pass daily over this road and you would think that the noisy train as it rushes past would frighten the bird, but it doesn't one mite. They sit composedly on their eggs throughout incubation and do not seem to mind the noise in the least. With all the jarring the eggs receive it is a wonder that they hatch. Beneath other railroad and wagon bridges I have found Phoebe's and Robin's nests containing eggs. Have never seen a Robin remain on the nest when a train passed, but undoubtedly do at night.

Mr. Gibbs, in the article, mentioned above, speaks of birds dropping their

eggs in other bird's nests, etc. On May 12, 1897 I found a Ubiquitous Domesticus egg in a crack in a willow branch. On the under side of the branch in a Downy Woodpecker's cavity was a half-built Sparrow's nest. On May 20, 1899, at Bustleton, picked up a large Red-winged Blackbird's egg in a field. A search failed to reveal any nest, so I concluded it was dropped by the bird. At Pensauken, Camden county, N. J., on May 25, 1902, collected a fine set of two fresh eggs of the Dove (*zenaidura macroura*) from a Robin's nest, which was placed fifteen feet up in a maple tree. The Dove flushed from the nest. She probably constructed a nest but before she could use it, by some accident it was destroyed and she was forced to lay in the Robin's nest.

RICHARD F. MILLER,
Philadelphia, Pa.

Solitary Sandpiper Breeding in Pennsylvania.

In August of the present year it has been my good fortune to discover that the Solitary Sandpiper breeds beyond a doubt in Pike county, Pa.

In one of my walks along a characteristic mountain stream of this vicinity I suddenly came upon an adult Solitary Sandpiper. Following it up the stream about twenty yards I observed another adult and a young bird. This was in an immature plumage. While it had some use of its wings, yet on chasing it a little while I soon caught it, and am sure it had not been out of the nest but a short time. The next day two more immature birds were seen.

My first thought was that they were early migrants, but upon a second thought I saw that it was clearly impossible for these young birds to travel any considerable distance.

Of course this is unusually late nest-

ing but my theory is that the first set of eggs had been destroyed in some manner and that these birds were the result of a second effort.

Is it not uncommon for this bird to be found nesting this far south?

RICHARD C. HARLOW.

Are you sure these were not the Spotted Sandpiper? They were a late brood in either case.—Ed.

Snowy Owls in November.

In the *Oologist* for January, Mr. George L. Fordyce of Youngstown, O., relates the taking of a Snowy Owl near Canfield, Ohio, on November 23, last, by a farmer; and in commenting upon it suggests that it is quite unusual for a Snowy Owl to be found as far south so early in the winter, inasmuch as this bird is supposed to come into the United States during severe winter weather, or on account of unfavorable food conditions in its northern home.

That Mr. Fordyce is quite wrong in his supposition, and that November is the very month in which the Snowy Owl is most often taken throughout the northern states will be borne out, I believe, by the testimony of any of our ornithologists or collectors who have had experience with this bird.

Being a bird in the colder regions of the north,—a lover of ice and snow—the supposition might be natural that this owl would only condescend to visit us during severe winter weather, and there seems to be a generally accepted theory to this effect. But theory and practice quite often fail to agree.

In the New England states, where the Snowy Owl is a more frequent visitor, it is more often observed in the late fall and early winter than later on. I recall some years ago being in Worcester, Mass., on business in the month of November, and having a little time at my disposal, called upon Mr. Charles K. Reed, the widely-

known taxidermist. He showed me among other things, a fine Snowy Owl in the meat, which had just been brought in. Upon asking him if he did not get hold of as many of these owls in November as at any time, he stated that November was pre-eminently the time for them,—that more came to him in that month than in all of the winter months combined.

Here in Southern Indiana, in a latitude which is less than 39 degrees, we can hardly expect any visits from the Snowy Owl, but back in New York state, where I formerly resided (in the same county in which the *Oologist* is published) we were some times favored with visits from this pretty owl, and when we were, it was most often in November or December.

Referring back today, to notes which I made eight years ago on the birds of Western New York, I find that I have the following annotation under the Snowy Owl.

"A not uncommon visitant. A bird of the ice and snow of the far north, a few individuals straying southward to the Northern United States in late fall and winter. Plentiful some winters, and not observed at all, others. Irregular. While it may be met with any late fall or winter month, here November and December seem to be the months of its most frequent occurrences, particularly the former."

Such seem to have been my impressions at the time, and were I living back along old Lake Ontario today, and were I desirous of procuring one of these beautiful white owls for my collection, I should certainly look for it with the largest measure of hope in the month of November.

The taking of the Snowy Owl at Canfield, Ohio, on November 22nd, seems quite regularly in line with the usual habits of the bird, as observed and read about by

Yours very truly,
CORNELIUS F. POSSON.

About Those Red-tails.

Philo, Ill., Jan. 28, 1906.

My dear Mr. Short:—

My experience with the Red-tailed Hawk in Illinois has been so like that of George L. Fordyce of Youngstown, Ohio, that I should like to know more about the set of five eggs found by Mr. W. K. Hatler. The date in May is possible if the earlier nests of the Red-tail has been disturbed, as this bird is very persistent. My experience, however, has been that second and third sets of a season are invariably smaller with all birds, (if the same number of eggs has not been deposited) never a larger number. With several years notes on the Red-tail for reference, I find the following facts. Personally I have never looked into a Red-tailed Hawk's nest that contained more than two eggs. My last season's list was seven sets of two. In each case the Hawks rebuilt and deposited two eggs, which they hatched. One exception, however, because of the beautiful markings of the first and second sets from one female, I will confess that she had to lay a third set, before I allowed her to hatch her brood.

By May 20 she was faithfully incubating her third set of two eggs and the lusty young pair are probably as happy as though they had been hatched in March. At any rate I did not reduce the supply of Red-tails, for only one brood is reared each season under any circumstances.

Although my luck has never extended beyond sets of twos, Dr. Jesse has collected at least three sets of three each, in the same vicinity. Also, I had the pleasure of seeing (and a great temptation to steal) a fine set of four eggs all beautifully marked. They were collected by S. S. Stansell in March, 1905, in Putnam county, Illinois, along the Illinois River. I re-

gard sets of three Red-tailed Hawks as rare, sets of four very rare and sets of five so extremely rare that if they were taken in May, I am afraid they might turn out eggs of the Red-shouldered Hawk.

ISAAC E. HESS.

Owing to the interest excited by these Red-tail records, I reprint the following from Sept., 1904, Oologist, and would say that I would not hesitate to guarantee this set of five eggs. I have full faith in Mr. Price's statements and had the set in my possession a fortnight.

The eggs were a plain colored, full sized type of Red-tail and uniform as to general shape.

I hope to give more on the subject later.

E. H. SHORT.

Five Eggs of Red-tail.

An unusual set of five eggs of Red-tail Hawk, taken in Kankakee county, Ill., Apr. 12, 1904, by E. A. Price. Mr. Price says:

"This wood was examined on April 2d, except a small portion and I was within 100 yards of this nest at that time but I first saw it from another grove on the opposite side, one-half mile away, on April 12th. Had I found it on the 2nd, it would probably have contained 2 or 3 fresh eggs as the set had been incubated about one week on the 12th. And yet some people don't believe in luck."

We took photo of this set through kindness of Mr. Price, but owing to an unfortunate selection of background, the photo would not make a half-tone.

We specially regret this as one egg was cracked in transit back to Mr. Price's Collection, an accident we greatly regret though he kindly refrains from a very hard kick.—Editor.

Philo, Ill., Jan. 28, 1906.

My Dear Mr. Short:—

Your recent notes and Mr. Dietrich's find of the double nest of the Black-throated Blue Warbler has called to mind one of my interesting experiences in nest study. For many years I have been particularly interested in the nesting habits of the Dickcissel (*Spiza americana*). I am sure that it would not be an over-statement to say that I had examined over a thousand nests of little Dick in the last ten years. Probably (because of his numbers and the comparative ease with which his nest is found) I have given him more attention than any other of our Illinois birds. But with all of his eccentricities, I have never known him to depart from his regular habits and construct a double nest, but once. I regarded the find so rare that I walked home, a distance of two miles, and returned with my camera to record it "in situ." The double-nest was two feet above the ground in a thistle, a very common situation for the second nesting of this bird in early July. Four eggs were in the nest when I flushed the female and examination revealed another complete nest below, which also contained a fresh set of four eggs. I have never been able to satisfy myself as to the cause for the desertion of the lower nest as no reason was evident to me. It did not show signs of being disturbed and contained no egg of the Cow-bird, which is the cause of the double nests of the Yellow Warbler. Indeed, it is seldom that I have found the Dickcissel imposed upon by the Cowbird and never have I found this parasite's egg present when the thistle site was chosen. Perhaps Mrs. Cowbird has an unwholesome regard for the prickly branches of this extensively used Dickcissel retreat.

Has the editor of the Oologist a theory that might explain the motive

for this strange departure in Dickcissel architecture? I am sending you a photo of the two-story home.

Yours very truly,

ISAAC E. HESS.

The Cerulean Warbler.

In the Oologist of November, 1904, I gave my experience with the nesting of the Cerulean Warbler to that date and will now carry it through the season of 1905.

Nest 6, May 30, 1905.—I believe that any nest, placed above the ground, can be found by watching the birds if one has some general knowledge of the species under consideration, combined with ample time and patience. Acting on this, I got an early start and determined to remain until a nest was located, if it took till dark. A male was soon located by his song and kept under inspection until he revealed the presence of his mate. She was gathering nest material and I followed her home. This would seem to indicate quick work, but just five hours elapsed between the first note of song and nest discovery. The difficulty lay in keeping sight of the female. When she secured a satisfactory amount of material, she went to the nest without a pause, dodging through the branches and around the more dense tree tops. As she did her collecting at a hundred yards or more from the nest, I could only trace her flight as far as possible and move up to that point. Nothing now remained but to select the nearest open spot, affording the greatest range of vision, and wait, shifting my position, however, to keep between the song of her mate and the approximate nest location, for I knew she would secure her material in his vicinity. I lost her twice but, at last saw her settle upon the nest. This was fifty-five feet above the

ground on the horizontal fork of a rather slender elm branch and seven feet from the main trunk. The tree was in a small opening beside a narrow wagon trail and the nest, except for some interior decoration, was completed. In placing her lichens and spider silk, the female often fluttered in the air like a hummingbird at a flower and before leaving invariably hopped into the nest and turned around several times to test the fit or smooth down the rough places. She then flew to a neighboring tree and worked through the branches in search of food, some times making a complete circuit of all the trees surrounding the nesting site, but not again approaching it or exhibiting any knowledge of its existence, even while I was up the tree. Her departure was always sudden and without warning, and away she would dart until lost to view. The male did not appear during the two hours I was there but, most of the time, his music could be heard in the distance. This was not a motive of precaution on his part as I learned from observation of late pairs, that when the female is incubating he remains near her and comes to the nest every half hour or so. The above nest was poorly fastened and a wind storm blew it down before any eggs were deposited.

Nest 7, June 8, 1905.—The labor and time consumed in finding Nest 6 decided me to fall back to the old reliable way of systematically searching every tree in the woods, for not only will you find all the nests of this Warbler but many nests of other birds that would otherwise be overlooked, the Vireos, in particular. Nest 7 was not only in the same tree, but on the identical crotch as Number 4. The fresh eggs it contained, however, were not laid by the same bird as the previous set. They are larger, of different shape and finely spotted over

the whole surface while the markings on the other set are confined to a wreath of blotches near the larger end and the eggs possess a more pronounced tint of the bluish ground color. The bird was not at home when this nest was discovered and did not return until I had reached the ground with the whole outfit. She could not understand her loss and hopped on and off the crotch, frequently uttering a sharp "chip" and settling down as if the nest was still there.

Nest 8, June 8, 1905.—After packing Number 7, I went to the tree that held Number 5, last year, and found a new nest with the bird on. This was on the lowest limb and four feet from the main trunk. It contained four eggs about six days advanced in incubation. The two sets from this tree were undoubtedly from the same bird.

Nest 9, June 8, 1905.—A large tree had fallen and, striking a log tangle, its roots had torn loose and were hoisted about ten feet above the ground. I walked up the trunk to this point and could get a fine view, being higher than most of the surrounding young tree and bush growth. I first noticed a Wood Thrush and Scarlet Tanager on their respective nests and then caught sight of what looked like a knot on the horizontal branch of a red oak just sixty feet above the ground and fifteen feet from the extreme top of the tree. This was fully 150 yards away but by looking steadily I soon perceived the tail of a Cerulean against the background of sky. Upon ascending the tree, I found the nest placed on the main fork and five feet from the trunk. It contained five eggs about one-half incubated. The female did not leave until I shook the limb.

Nest 10, June 11, 1905—All the foregoing nests, from 1 to 9 inclusive, were found in the same piece of woods

but on June 8th, I heard only three males singing and as the nests were found, I concluded that further search was useless, and turned my attention to a piece of heavy timber on P. C. 506, Gratiot Township. Mr. Walter Greenburg accompanied me on this trip, and although we worked all day, only a part of the woods was covered. I found but one nest. This was in a large red oak, just 42 feet above the ground and 5 feet from the main trunk on a horizontal limb and in a cluster of sprouts, and differed from all previous sites by being in the most gloomy part of the woods, where not enough light penetrated to permit the existence of undergrowth. The nest contained four young birds three days old. I scooped them out to make sure none were cowbirds and did not replace them very nicely, owing to the swaying limb. Nothing was ever seen of the parents until I reached the ground and had watched the nest about ten minutes. They appeared very suddenly and alighted beside the nest at the same instant, both carrying food. The male took one look inside, uttered a sharp note of alarm and let his food supply fall to the ground. This was duplicated by the female and both appeared much agitated, frequently peering into the nest and fluttering about it. Finally, the female settled upon her brood and her mate darted away. Later in the day Mr. Greenburg found a nest of four eggs upon the point of hatching. This was placed on the fork of a small branch growing from a large limb fifteen feet from the trunk and fifty-three from the ground. The tree was a red oak and on the margin of an opening in the woods.

Next 11, June 18, 1905.—I started in where we left off on the 11th, and finally found a nest with the bird on. This nest was about thirty feet inside the woodland border and placed on

the horizontal branch of a small red oak, eight feet from the trunk and only twenty above the ground. It contained four slightly incubated eggs. These differ from any previously taken in having no bluish ground tint.

J. CLAIRE WOOD.

Detroit, Michigan.

Editorial Notes.

The Mich. Orn. Club Bulletin has temporarily suspended. We hope it may soon reappear.

Mr. H. R. Taylor of Alameda, Calif., well known to readers of the "Nid," has purchased the J. M. Carroll collection entire.

The communication below is self-explanatory.

Demarest, N. J., 1, 14, 1906.

Friend Short:—

I want to thank you for your publication in the Dec. Oologist anent the murder of Warden Guy M. Bradley. I think it will do good in a class that might not otherwise be reached.

With your permission, I will supplement what was known concerning this matter when your communication went to press. Despite the best efforts, it was impossible to secure an indictment against the murderer of Warden Bradley, as the witnesses were all friends, and swore that the killing was done in self-defense, and the man is at liberty.

All that now remains is for every bird-lover who appreciates bravery, devotion to duty and nobility of character, to testify their respect for the memory of Guy Bradley and their admiration for the manner he performed his duty, faithful, even unto death, by contributing to the fund that is to provide a home for the destitute widow and two infant orphans. Mrs. Bradley is now in extreme want. Every dollar received will help toward

this worthy cause, and will constitute an act to which the donor will ever be able to look back with satisfaction. Contributions should be sent to Mr. Wm. Dutcher, 141 Broadway, New York City.

B. S. BOWDISH,

Teacher's Department, Nat. Asso. Aud. Societies.

In Jan., '06, issue of Auk, Mr. J. Claire Wood gives a careful synopsis of Michigan observations on fall migrating warblers. The fact that he did not note some species in 1905 that he found in 1904 is in line with the irregular migrating habits of this family, as noted by others.

His probable record of Connecticut Warbler, on Oct. 19, and the positive record of Black-throated Blue on Oct. 26, are interesting from their lateness.—Ed.

We are in receipt of many complaints against one Jas. Collins, of Aberdeen, S. D. As Mr. Collins fails to answer our requests for explanations, we feel obliged to warn everyone to leave him alone until the matter is cleared up. The Editor hopes that he may yet be able to publish that he has straightened up.

BIRD SKINS.

I have left, the following A No. 1 Bird Skins: 6 American Crow, 3 Blue Jay, 1 Least Bittern (poor), 2 Cedar Waxwing, 4 Pine Grosbeak—females, 13 Snowflake, 2 Purple Finch—females, 1 white-breasted Nuthatch, 1 black-throated Green Warbler. I will send the above 33 Skins and add 2 of the Gray Squirrel and 1 very fine mounted Crow. Entire lot is cheap at \$10. I'll box them all and express at purchaser's expense, for only \$5.75.

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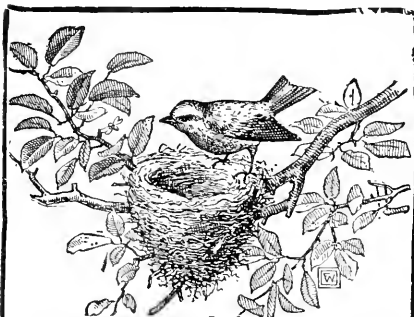
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VOL. XXIII. No. 4.

ALBION, N. Y., APRIL, 1906.

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THE OÖLOGIST.

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ALBION, N. Y., APRIL, 1906.

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THE OÖLOGIST,

A Monthly Publication Devoted to
OOLOGY, ORNITHOLOGY AND TAXI-
DERMY.

FRANK H. LATTIN, Publisher,
ALBION, N. Y.

ERNEST H. SHORT, Editor and Manager.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

Snowy Owl.

Nyctea nyctea.

By CHARLES L. PHILLIPS,
Taunton, Mass.

This beautiful diurnal owl is a res-

ident of the far north. It doubtless even visits the country around that magnetic center which thus far has baffled Arctic explorers, or the polar region, which seems to be very securely sealed by ice and snow. This species was said to be abundant around Point Barrow, Northern Alaska, and a relative, who was a member of the Vincent relief expedition on the revenue cutter Bear, said that when he first saw around this land; and noted the swift polar current bringing ice blocks in size from a small fragment to large bergs, in quantities, from the frigid north, he had no desire to penetrate farther into that cold, bleak, desolate region. As far as eye could see into that northern ocean, crystalline ice only met the vision. And yet this rugged owl crosses these frigid stretches and probably breeds in the unknown beyond, for they have been found as far north as human beings have penetrated.

Nyctea breeds in the higher parts of Newfoundland, in Labrador, the country directly north, in Alaska, and probably throughout intermediate points. The nest is usually a slight depression, preferably on a knoll, lined with a few feathers and perhaps a little moss. The eggs are white and range from three to ten and are deposited from the middle of May to July 1st, according to locality. They are laid at intervals, it is said, and sometimes the first bird of the season is ready to fly before the last one breaks from the shell.

In winter a small proportion of



Pair Snowy Owls from Buzzard's Bay.

See Article by C. L. Phillips in this Number.

these owls come south. They are liable to occur anywhere east of the Rocky Mountains and north of Long Island, but they are the most common on the Atlantic coast. They are liable to stray to our southern borders.

The specimens in the cut came to me last November from So. Dartmouth, Mass., which borders on Buzzard's Bay, a noble body of water, opening into the broad Atlantic. They were fine birds and they made an im-

posing pair. The larger one is the female.

About this time some duck hunters were in camp on Long Pond, Lakeville, Mass., near this locality. They had live decoys out. Early one cold morning, a member of the camp noticed a white object among the ducks. He could not make out just what it was but he saw that it was alive. He brought his rifle to bear and hit the mark. He then went to the object in a boat and saw that it was a fine female Snowy Owl, with her talons fixed in the back of the unfortunate decoy. A friend now has the owl in his collection of skins.

A. K. Fisher, an authority, says the economic value of the Snowy Owl is limited, as it seldom comes to points where agriculture flourishes. These owls eat many small mammals, occasionally a rabbit or game bird and a few small birds and some fish, etc. They are said to be quite expert anglers, watching motionless on a rock perhaps until a fish approaches, then make a lightning-like stroke with one foot. They are also swift, almost noiseless flyers, being able to overtake ducks, pigeons, grouse and even hawks, it is said.

Summarily, the Snowy Owl is a noble bird, given savage ways by the Creator, but gentle in confinement among friends and certainly a striking object when a part of Boreal landscape.

[As this seems to be a Snowy Owl number, we are giving a half-tone of Mr. Phillip's pair on another page. They admirably illustrate the two sexual characteristics the Editor has noted to be almost, if not absolutely, invariable, the males smallest and whitest; the females, larger and more heavily barred with black. These conclusions are, of course, confined to winter dress.—Ed.]

A Remarkable Mistake.

Ever since I have been interested in the wide field of ornithology, I have often deceived birds by replacing one or more of their eggs with eggs of another species, without the owners detecting the difference, but kept right on with their domestic affairs. In that way, a Song Sparrow can be made foster parent to a Swamp, White-throated or Savanna Sparrow, or even a Junco nestling, without any harm to either parties concerned. Of course, there are some species that will not allow the least meddling with their sets and again some individuals are far more sensitive than others of the same species.

In the mentioned attempts I once met with a remarkable, almost impossible result; to portray the details of this astonishing mistake shall be the subject of this article. It was in the season of 1902. I was at that time posted in a thinly settled district of Northern Wisconsin. It was here that when walking in a deep-trodden trail, the 27th of May, I noticed a Grouse, Bonasa Umbellus, sitting on her nest, only four feet from me. I approached until within two feet of her, when, with a whirl of wings, off she sailed, describing the characteristic curve, far into the woods.

By the way, the nest was the most exposed one of this species that I had before or since seen. It was placed between the roots of a live hemlock that grew on a knoll in high timber. There was no bush or low vegetation of any kind to hide the nest from plain sight. It was composed of dry leaves, a few grass spears and several feathers. It contained seven plain buff eggs, which were slightly incubated. Just then a friend wanted to exchange for a set of Grouse, so I decided to collect

this set, but instantly the idea flashed through my mind, I ought to have some substitutes to put in their place and see what Bonasa would think of them. But what kind to take? I had often seen some old geese eggs lay in a box in an old shed on a farm where I had often passed. These eggs had been set the year before, but for some reason had not hatched, so still lay there all stained and dirty. To these I took refuge. I made haste to get three of the large eggs, nestled them nicely into the bed of leaves and went off a ways to watch the result. After twenty minutes she came in a very cautious walk, always stopping and looking around; at last she was at the nest and looked at the eggs. She seemed delighted to find them there yet, evidently I had not put them in the nest in the proper way, for she turned them from one side to the other, all round and round, till at last they lay properly; then she made preparations to sit on them, but again had great trouble covering the three monsters. She turned around four times before she held the correct position. But now, there she sat, the keen black eyes half closed, a figure of perfect contentment. Now, I knew she had accepted the three eggs for her set of seven and was trying to raise goslings, but I doubted that she would possess enough perseverance to incubate sufficient time, even if her new set would have been fertile. At the end I found out that I had greatly wronged her in her persevering qualities.

That day I did not bother her, but the other day, and after that frequently. I always found her on her nest, carefully hiding her treasures. June came and went. July 2nd I left the locality, but before going I went along the quiet path once more to bid my forest friend adieu, who was sitting on her nest as contented as ever,

still incubating those dirty monsters. I am not able to tell how long a time she thought it necessary to incubate yet, for I had no further connections with the locality.

I secretly hoped that some other Oologist (who was ignorant of the facts) would find the nest. How he would have gazed at those abnormalities! Identification would have been easy for the female sat very close. With a thrilling heart he would have taken his rare specimens with him, to give them a place among his scarcest of scarce sets. However, his surprise and astonishment would have mocked all description the moment his drill cut through the thick shell.

Now, at closing, I would like to know if any of the readers have made similar experiments, or met with such result as I am able to report.

E. J. DIETRICH.

More About Snowy Owls.

The interesting article by Neil F. Poisson on Snowy Owls in the March Oologist, seemed especially timely to me, inasmuch, that as I sat reading his article on the day of its arrival (March 19), a fresh specimen of the Arctic traveler was lying stretched on the table before me.

If my own record could settle the question of the preponderance of early or late winter visitors, Mr. Fordyce would be unquestionably in the lead. But one swallow does not make a summer, and I am able to add but a single link to his chain. However, the Snowy Owl has hitherto been very erratic in its flights—some years plentiful, other years scarcely seen—may not his time of coming also be irregular and vary in different localities and different seasons? As to his usual coming, I could not testify, for his appearance here, in Central Illinois, along the 40 degree parallel is regard-

ed as unusual at any time during the winter. But it does not seem reasonable that the conditions causing the owls to leave their homes in the far north early in this season, would remain in force the greater part of our winter.

Granting this, why should they return north until our winter was over, and if they stay, would not their numbers be further augmented by the later arrivals, making them more plentiful during the later winter months?

It is true, as says Mr. Posson, that theory and practice do not always agree but I have a theory to present which I believe will partly explain why Mr. Posson and perhaps many other collectors have more records of the taking of this bird during the early months of winter. The rabbit and Quail season opens during November and December and in consequence many more hunters are afield and each hunter is out oftener than in the later months. He is not out for Owls but these foolish (?) birds have a habit of flying against his gun with fatal results.

After the Quail season is over and the season draws near when the buyers refuse to take rabbits, our Nimrods have enjoyed sufficient hunting to last them until the water birds arrive. At any rate, men and boys are seldom seen with their guns in these parts after the first of January until the spring flight of Ducks and Geese begins.

It is quite possible for both Mr. Posson and Mr. Fordyce to be right: Mr. Fordyce, saying that more of these birds are in the Northern states during the later months of winter, and Mr. Posson, in stating that many more of them are taken in the months of November and December.

Would it not be interesting for each holder of a skin of the Snowy Owl to

send measurements and date of capture to the Oologist.

ISAAC E. HESS,
Philo, Ills.

Snowy Owl—Taken at Philo, Illinois, 40 degree parallel, March 19, 1906. Length, 27 in.; wing, 18 in.; tail, 10 in.; tip to tip, 62 in.

ISAAC E. HESS,
Buckfield, Me.

Mr. Short:—

I saw in my March Oologist that Mr. Fordyce speaks of a Snowy Owl being taken in November. I took four (2 males and 2 females) in November last. I am in the South Central part of Maine.

C. W. SHAW.

Youngstown, O., Mar. 26, '06.
Ernest H. Short, Editor,
Chili, New York.

In the Oologist for March, Mr. Cornelius F. Posson of Indiana, claims that I am wrong in my supposition that November is early in the winter for the Snowy Owl to be taken in Ohio. He calls attention to the fact that in notes made eight years ago on the Birds of Western New York, he stated that November was the month of its most frequent occurrence.

My observation in Ohio dates back more than twenty years and during that period the Snowy Owl has not appeared in this locality, except at intervals of three to five years. December and January have been the months that it has been most frequently seen or taken, except the one that brought out this discussion, and which as a matter of fact, is my first record for November. That the average time of its appearance here will average later than November may be illustrated by the following records for the winter of 1905-1906, which I have carefully kept: November 23d,

one taken at Canfield, Ohio; December 15th, one taken near Girard, Ohio; December 20th, one taken at West Williamsfield, Ohio; December 27th, one seen near Canfield, Ohio; January 15th, one taken at New Springfield, Ohio. Of these five records for the past winter, four were December 15th, and later, so that my statement that November is early for the Snowy Owl to appear in this locality is sustained by the facts for the winter that has just passed.

One reason, it seems to me, that the Snowy Owl should come here somewhat later than Western New York is because of the difference in latitude. Canfield, Ohio, where the Snowy Owl in question was taken, is almost exactly on the 41st parallel of latitude, while Albion, New York, is above the 43rd parallel, farther north than Southern Canada.

Previous to 1883, I resided in Cayuga County, New York, and as I now remember the Snowy Owl came there nearly every winter, while we have it only at intervals of three to five years.

I did not keep notes at that time, as I do now, and for that reason cannot say what months it was most common. I do remember definitely of having seen one on New Years Day, but do not remember what year it was.

If any readers of the Oologist can give records of the Snowy Owl near the 41st parallel of latitude, I would very much like to hear from them.

I think it would be of interest if you would add to it yourself, giving any reasons you may have why the Snowy Owl does not come every year.

Yours very truly,
GEO. L. FORDYCE.

[Well! I think all these gentlemen are partly right. I get Snowy Owl records and birds all through the season from November to March. As a rule they come from New England

first, New York, Pennsylvania and Ontario, etc., next, and the great bulk from Minnesota, Dakotas and Manitoba in January and February. Think the snowfall affects the migration more than other causes.—*Ed.*]

Santa Ana, Cal.

My Dear Mr. Short:—

In all the books on birds that I have read, and also all those I have spoken to about it, say that all the nests of the Kildeer they have found contained eggs in May and June. In "Birds of California," it gives the breeding season as May and June. I found a nest the 8th of March, 1906, the eggs were well marked and make a nice set. There were four of them. The nest was a slight depression lined with rootlets. They had been set on about five days.

I would like to know if any of the readers of the Oologist have had any similar experiences.

W. J. CHAMBERLIN.

[Let us hear from others in Calif. in the east this would be practically impossible.—*Ed.*]

Perry, Ohio.

Dear Mr. Short:—

Reading Mr. Hess' article in the March Oologist, also Mr. Fordyce's article of before, calls me to give my experience of my finds of the Red-tails. Out of twenty nests I have examined, eleven contained three eggs, seven two eggs, one four and one of of one and was incomplete; two sets of two were perfect fresh, and five sets of two could positively be sure as being complete sets of two. In 1902 was the only year I took second sets from.

April 13th, 1902, took 3 eggs, incubation well along; on May 11 I took the second set of 3 eggs, incubation just begun.

April 20th, 1902, 1-4, incubation far along. On May 18th, took the second set of three, and no doubt but the

second sets are from the same pairs of birds. The one of four set, are the largest eggs of the the Redtails I have ever taken, measuring 2.43x1.96; 2.42x1.97; 2.40x1.97; 2.30x1.90. The second sets of same birds are just a little smaller.

With me, I consider three eggs the most common and a set of four quite rare. Have seen the set of five collected by Mr. Price and they are O. K.

RAY DENSMORE.

Some Summer Residents.
(Montgomery Co., Pa.)

June 3rd of the present year found me in the field looking up some nests. As the day proved a rather productive one, I will endeavor to recall some of its revelations.

On leaving home I struck across some fields and was soon in an old apple orchard. Here in a Flicker's hole was a nest of the Bluebird with 5 eggs. In various trees were discovered numerous nests of the Robin, mostly containing young. A little farther on, a Flicker leaves a nest in an old apple tree, and on investigation, 6 eggs are found. This seems rather late as of several other nests examined, all have young.

Leaving the orchard, I pass by a pair of Sparrow Hawks and their five young and come to a hole in an old scyamore stub. From this I flush a Red-headed Woodpecker. I judged it to have eggs, though I did not investigate. All about are flying Barn Swallows and Chimney Swifts and the Grackles are already gathering in small flocks; many crows and a few of *Ossifragus*. Near an old farmhouse a nest of the House Wren is discovered with 7 eggs.

A short walk now brings me to a creek with a number of overhanging willow trees. Here a pair of Wood Peewees are discovered gathering lichens

and by watching them a nest is found upon a dead limb, overhanging the water. A walk up the creek shows numerous Yellow-billed Cuckoos and one or two Black-billed. Here an Indigo-bird flushes from a blackberry bush and a nest is found with 4 eggs. In a tree overhanging the water an Acadian Flycatcher's nest is found with 3 eggs. In a patch of briars I found a Cardinal's nest with 3 eggs and two Chat's nests, both with 4 eggs. Several Song Sparrow's nests are found with 4 or 5 eggs. Now, we see a low damp woods, and in crossing it an Ovenbird flushes, revealing a nest with 5 eggs. Among the birds attracted by the cries of the Ovenbirds are a pair of Kentucky Warblers. By watching them through my binoculars, their own treasure is detected, a beautiful nest with 5 eggs at the base of a small bush.

In a different woods, another Kentucky nest is found with 3 eggs and one of the Cowbird. In this same woods, Blue-winged Warblers, Yellow Warblers and Tufted Titmice are rather common.

We now strike off across the fields for home, but pause at a swamp to observe a Maryland Yellow-throat's nest with 5 eggs. Numerous Red-wing's nests with 3 and 4 eggs are found and one nest of the Meadow Lark with 4 eggs.

In an old orchard two nests of the Crested Flycatcher were found, both with 5 eggs, while several nests were found of the Catbird and Wood Thrush, all with eggs. These, however, were not found in the orchard. Later on, I found a Rough-winged Swallow's nest with 6 eggs in an old Kingfisher's hole. A few Chipping and Field Sparrows are found with young and I arrived home tired, but well satisfied with my day's record.

R. C. HARLOW.

Publications Received.

Am. Ornithology, Vol. VI, No. 34;
The "West," Vol. XXXII, No. 1, 2;
"The Warbler," New Ser., Vol. II, No. 1;
Bulletin Penn. Div. of Zoology, Vol. III, 8 and 9; Journal Me. Orn. Soc., Vol. VIII, No. 1; Amateur Naturalist, Vol. II, No. 6; A. S. of C. C. Bulletin, Vol. I, Nos. 1 and 2; "Condor," Vol. VIII, No. 2; "Coin Cabinet," Vol. I, No. 3.

Editorial.

Mr. Leiblesperger of Fleetwood, Pa., reports a nest of Baltimore Oriole occupied immediately after construction by a House Wren, who drove Madame Oriole away and built her own nest within. He reports sets of 3 Mourning Dove, (the Editor's third record), 5 of Wood Thrush and 9 of Crested Flycatcher.

We note from other sources that Rev. Peabody, of ornithological fame, is preparing an exhaustive work on Nesting Habits of North American Birds. It's sure to be good.

Rev. E. C. Mitchell of St. Paul, has donated his superb collection of Indian relics and coins to the Minnesota Historical Society. We note that they are duly grateful. Who wouldn't be?

Our attention has been called during the past few months to the death of two taxidermists, from what was said to be arsenical poisoning. Mr. G. F. Breninger of Phoenix, Ariz., once prominent as a California bird man, and Louis F. Senso, of Laporte, Ind., an ambitious young naturalist. There seems to be a great difference in the susceptibility of people to this drug, but perhaps the use of the dry powdered arsenic is not advisable in any case. Always be careful about cuts and sores and keep your finger nails cleaned out.

We note the A. S. of C. C. is issuing their Bulletin as a monthly instead of irregularly, as before. Success to them.

In the last issue of Condor, Mr. Nelson Carpenter mentions a runt Hummingbird egg of infinitesimal size. We have seen a runt Canary's egg of approximately same dimensions and think it still in existence.

From current issue "Am. Ornithology":

Circular of Inquiry with reference to the Present Status of the English Sparrow Problem in America.

1. Are you familiar with Bulletin No. 1, The English Sparrow in America, published by the Agricultural Department in 1889; and do you agree with the facts there presented and with its conclusions?

2. Is the English Sparrow present in your locality? How numerous? Are they increasing or decreasing in numbers?

3. What is being done to exterminate them? Please outline methods which you deem effective.

4. What influence have you observed the English Sparrow to have upon native birds?

5. Would public opinion in your locality favor the adoption of effective measures to exterminate this species?

6. Please state facts and arguments, pro and con, which decide this problem in your own mind.

Everybody interested is requested to send replies to the above questions before June 1, if possible, to the undersigned. It is proposed to gather a concensus of opinion from all parts of this country and Canada. The data will be made public as soon as possible.

Mar. 5, 1906.

Signed, A. H. ESTABROOK,

Clark University, Worcester, Mass.
Newspapers please copy.

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VOL. XXIII. No. 5.

ALBION, N. Y., MAY, 1906.

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CHAS. K. REED.

Albion, N. Y., Mar. 19, 1906.

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THE OÖLOGIST.

VOL. XXIII. No. 5.

ALBION, N. Y., MAY, 1906.

WHOLE No. 226

THE OÖLOGIST,

A Monthly Publication Devoted to
OÖLOGY, ORNITHOLOGY AND TAXI-
DERMY.

FRANK H. LATTIN, Publisher,
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ERNEST H. SHORT, Editor and Manager.

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ERNEST H. SHORT, Editor and Manager,
Chill, Monroe Co., N. Y.

Among the Hills of California.

By HARRY H. DUNN.

I sit by the cheery grate this cool October evening, Davie's "Nests and Eggs," Reed's "Eggs of North American Birds," and Ridgeway's beloved "Manual" on the table; the time sea-

soned briar in my mouth and across my knees that rare and dear old volume that Dr. Cooper wrote more than thirty years ago—"The Land Birds of California."

And, one by one with the pages of the book, the leaves of memory glide past, a retrospective vision. Once more I am living on the rim of hills that swings in a semicircle about my old Southern California home. It is morning in May—morning with a glint of silver around the golden edges of the new-born day. I slip away over the hills while mother and father are yet asleep—clad in corduroys and a denim shirt—a warm garb but serviceable in the underbrush and on the sides of rough-barked oaks and seymores. At my heels trailed Schneider—a squat, little dog of no pedigree, but undoubted bravery and skill as a squirrel catcher—peace be to his ashes, he died a few months ago.

Directly back of the house lay a sloping stretch of natural springs of crude oil. The liquid from these mingled with the dust and earth of the hillside until it had former a crust through which, at rare intervals, a clump of California laurel had grown. No carpet of grass covered this barren place, and over it at eventide the nighthawks flew by dozens. Often, in seasons previous, had I searched for their nests unsuccessfully, but this morning, moving slowly through a clump of laurel, thinking of a certain sycamore flat toward which I was headed, I almost stepped on Mrs. Nighthawk covering her two eggs amid the dead and fallen leaves of last year.



NESTS OF CORMORANT OR "SHAG," IN SITU.

Photo by R. S. Gordon, White Loch, Wigtownshire, Scotland.

Nests on Island in Middle of Lake.

She tried every wile she knew—broken wing and all—to draw me from her home, but to no avail.

The eggs were practically fresh and as like the eggs laid by the eastern bird (*chordeiles virginianus*) as they could possibly have been. This was not the first set of the Texan Night-hawk I had taken, but the others had been found by watching some female that I had disturbed in a broad dry wash near my home.

On beyond, where the oil desert ceased and the greenery of the hills began, I came upon a nest of Anthony's Towhee, well hidden in a clump of sage brush. It was not more than a foot from the ground to the nest and its four pale blue eggs, lightly lined and dotted with black. I have seen some of these eggs which looked very much like the eggs of the Sonoran Red-winged Blackbird, but there was something distinctive about this set—something typical which induced me to keep them in my collection—where they are today.

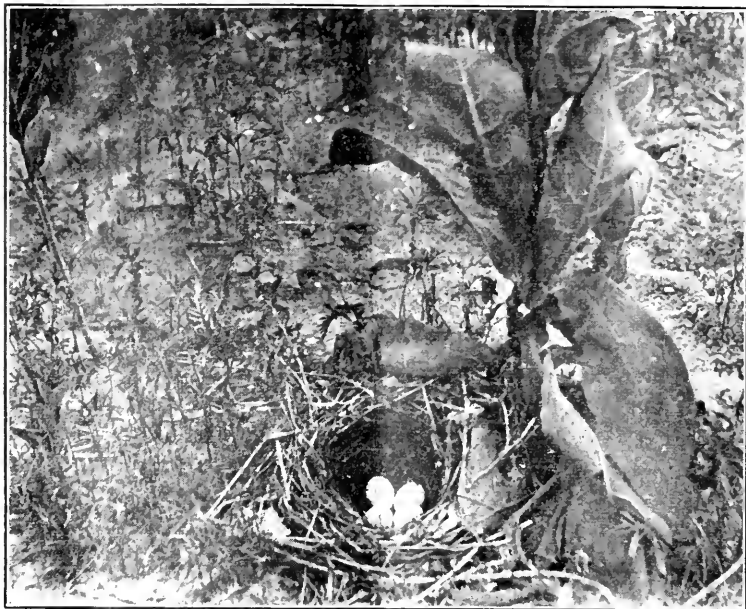
A pair of Vigors' Wrens were flitting about in a tangle of bush on a rocky side hill, but I felt that I was much too early for them, so passed on over the ridge and down into the flat bed of a wide canyon beyond—the Canyon of the Sycamores, as I had named it. Here a little stream flowed along between the trees, and, as is common in all groves of these trees, the ground was covered with dead leaves. Among these I literally waded, dragging my feet and making a great clatter, like a boy let loose from school, when up rose a quail, a blue blur of light between the tree trunks.

Down at my very feet—almost stepped upon, indeed, was a prettily rounded nest and fourteen eggs of the California Valley Quail (*Lophortyx Californica Vallicola*). These went into the collecting box, of course, and the

journey was resumed. For upwards of an hour I traveled on, dog at heel, like Rip Van Winkle, flushing here a towhee, there a woodpecker from some incompleted nest. Twice I climbed to abandoned crows' nests from which I saw telltale ears protruding, but in each case, though, the long-ears were at home, there were no eggs. From my collecting experiences among the owls, I am led to believe that there are many barren females or else that the young do not breed until they are two years, or more, old. Some years back, I shot seven of the long-eared variety from one grove of oaks for a Los Angeles taxidermist. All were of adult size and plumage, and not one had eggs started. Dissection showed very small ovaries, scarcely half the size of those of a laying female killed from the nest for my own collection a few days before. However, this is a question for wiser men than I to answer; so I pass it by for the more interesting details of the trip.

Midway down the grove of trees, I came upon a huge dead stub. This tree had once been the home, so I was told by an old herder, of a pair of "Pigeon" Hawks. Knowing his identity to be at fault, I supposed that he had found the home of a pair of Desert Sparrow Hawks, but when I arrived at the tree, it was so badly battered by the winds and the rain as to be practically useless for a nesting place ten feet above the ground, only a short splinter rising above that height. Below, however, a smart rap on the trunk with my hatchet brought a Red shated Flicker to a fresh-looking hole about eight feet up. Another rap sent her flying out, and a young sapling, cut to make a rude ladder, enabled me to get the six fresh eggs the nest contained.

Below and on the up-hill side of the



NEST AND EGGS OF LARK SPARROW; IN SITU.

See Article in This Issue.

tree, a long crack extended from the ground to the top of the stub. From this, in a place where a falling chip had made a sort of little shelf—several tiny twigs protruded. Closer inspection gave glimpses of strands of bark and fine horsehair. Again the little hatchet came into play and eight small eggs, so spotted with red as to seem one color, were transferred to the basket. Mrs. Wren was not at home, evidently the pounding on the flicker's nest had so disturbed her that she left before I came.

Then we, (the dog and I, that is) managed to flush an Annas Humming bird from her nest and two eggs, neatly saddled on the overhanging limb of an oak above the stream. By this time it was well past two o'clock, and so we (again the dog and I) sat down on the bole of a fallen oak to

eat our lunch. With we two it was ever share and share alike, so he got two of my four sandwiches, but the pie and cake, wise dog, he would not touch. Then I lay down to take a bit of a nap; when I woke my watch showed I had slept just one hour. Home was a long way off, but we had not seen the end of that canyon and we struck out, ever down hill, almost forgetting that we had to walk back.

Presently, rounding a bend in the canyon, we came to its mouth or within sight of it, for another grove of sycamores hid the actual meeting place of plain and hill from sight. Out beyond, the level valley rolled away up to and beyond the little town of Chino; through the golden haze floated the great Turkey Vultures, homeward bound to their caves in the hills. From my feet the canyon bed

fell away quite suddenly—and there, scarcely three hundred feet away and almost a third of that distance below me, sat a Red-tail on her nest in a slender sycamore. Surely, I thought, she must have young. A shot from the revolver woke the echoes and sent her in headlong flight from her home. I could not see into the nest well enough to distinguish eggs from very young birds, but nothing moved and I determined to climb the tree.

Down I went and up to the nest. Drawing myself over the rim three fine fresh eggs met my gaze. The green leaves that had been used to line the nest had not even had time to turn brown, so new it was.

Seven sets—none rare, but all good—seemed enough for one day's collecting and I turned for home. Night was turning the grey shadows to black and the tramp back over that four or five miles was leg-tiring, not to speak of soul-harrowing, etc. Finally, however, I did get home and found a warm supper, such as mothers can keep, waiting for me.

The Lark Sparrow in Illinois.

I saw him first on a bright spring day along an ideal country road, where trees were growing on either side and whose branches almost touched across the highway. I could not help but know him, those white tail feathers gave him away even before I could see the other markings which were so prominent.

I saw no more of the Lark Sparrow until two weeks later while going to Camp Illini to spend a few days I saw a great many of them perched on the fence posts or running along the rails. Mr. Lark, with his breast stuck out and his head thrown back and tail feathers spread, strutting from one end of the rail to the other and singing with all his might while

the lady of his heart was trying to keep out of his way.

The lark sparrow is somewhat shy, never allowing one to approach very near without taking flight.

They like the stumpy pastures and low creek bottoms where mullein and other broad-leaved plants grow, under their protecting leaves they hollow out the ground and build a nest of weeds and grasses and line it with hair or fine grasses. In this locality not more than five, rarely over four eggs are laid and two or more broods reared. I have never found a nest anywhere except on the ground.

SIDNEY S. S. STANSELL.

The Prairie Falcon in California.

One bright sunny day in March, Mr. Walter Smith and myself started out on a collecting trip. Using a horse and cart for conveyance, we traveled nearly six miles to a large cliff.

We tied our horse and walked nearly a half mile of the finish. When with 300 yards, we saw a Prairie Falcon and Smith exclaimed, "That one came out of that small hole," pointing to a certain cavity in the cliff.

We could see the eggs without our field glasses. I had a rope ladder 60 feet long and 100 feet of the other rope, so after setting a peg to anchor our ropes to, we let the ladder down and I ascended from below to find the eggs out of reach.

We then hunted up an old can and tied it to the end of a stick and I fished the four eggs from the nest. No one, until they have tried, can realize the risk of this work on a rope ladder, but when I got the four eggs I was happy as a lark.

Hole was 40 feet down the face of a dirt bluff or cliff and there was no nest, merely a depression in the soil.

On May 13, 1905, I took another

set, two miles east, in a like manner. With another companion, who had a 22 calibre rifle, we went to the cliff and fired at the holes until a bird came out. This time I had to climb 40 feet up a plain rope.

Found 3 eggs. The birds flew about as if they intended to attack me but never got nearer than 6 feet of me.

I have been told that their strike will knock a chicken 6 feet. They do much damage to poultry.

F. TRUESDALE.

—•••—
In North Carolina and Virginia.

(Parus carolinensis).

With the exception of the higher mountains, where they are partially replaced by the Black-capped species, *Carolinensis* is a common resident. In the valleys they are common, and on the lower portions of the higher elevations they appear numerous. In the low-lands and swamps, no matter how dense; in the orchards, groves and shade trees near the haunts of man, and in his garden and yard; in the high woods and hedges, and along the borders of streams, and wherever else we go,—they are sure to greet us with their pleasant notes of song or quick, emphatic chick-a-dee. Should we visit their haunts in winter we note them in company with Titmice and Kinglets, in bunches of from two to six; but if our visit should be in the spring or summer, quite a change is noticed, for they are seen only in pairs. If they are employed in excavating for the nest, or in building it, or in feeding and caring for a brood of young, how marked are their energetic efforts to succeed. The nesting season begins in the latter part of March or first part of April and continues until the middle of June, or perhaps the first day of July.

From two to three broods are rear-

ed in a season. The second nest is usually completed and the second set deposited by the first of the third week in May, or about six weeks later than the first, and sometimes a third may be deposited about the last of June, or about twelve weeks later than the first. For the different localities the dates for the construction of nests vary. In the more northern and western sections they are about two weeks later than in the south-east, and in some of the higher portions of Western Virginia they may be three weeks later in the construction of the nest than in southeastern North Carolina. A cavity dug in a stump is the usual nesting site, or a hollow tree may be chosen for the purpose, but the majority are in cavities dug by the birds. Of nineteen nests from which eggs were taken in 1898, seventeen were in cavities produced by the efforts of the birds. In limbs protruding from fallen logs, even when at an angle of several degrees, I have found nests with the entrance to the cavity on the under side of the limb; in protecting the nest from the severe rain storms we so frequently have in the early part of April, the limb served its purpose well. Repeatedly have I found them nesting in solitary stumps standing in fields and pastures where they were regularly visited by people, and on the hollows of orchard trees standing in the fields and gardens; in stumps on the borders of streams over the edge of the water, and in the darkest depths of the swamps; in the dark depths of the deep tangled woods, and in the most pleasant groves with their park-like scenery. A stump that has been standing for a while, and is yielding to the decaying of the hands of time, seems to be the first choice for a site; from it the bits of decayed wood are easily picked, offering but little resistance

to their sharp bills. Some times they choose some tall broken off tree trunk forty or fifty feet high, and dig the cavity five or six feet from the ground, thereby leaving thirty or forty feet of the trunk above the nest. I have seen one built in the hollow of a small stump standing in a field. The stump was about eight inches high with a cavity in the top extending downward to the level of the ground; in this cavity the nest was built, and the eggs were about one inch above the level of the ground. The depth of the cavity is from five to twelve inches, usually about seven. It is constructed with a small entrance, and is enlarged at the bottom to receive the nest of moss, cotton, wool, fine inner bark of trees, feathers, and occasionally some rabbit's fur. The eggs range from four to seven in number; five or six is the usual number, seven are rarer, but sets of seven are not uncommon.

R. PEARCE SMITHWICK,
Norfolk, Virginia.

OWLS.

The American Barn Owl.

Among the cliffs on the Salt Fork River in Grant county, Oklahoma, the Barn Owl makes its home. Last spring a small party made a trip to these cliffs for the purpose of obtaining a few sets of the Barn Owl. On the sixth of April we arrived and commenced letting down rope ladders and making them fast to some trees. So the next morning I descended to a ledge on which I had seen an owl the night before. From this ledge I saw several holes but they were nearly all out of reach, so I had to go back and let the ladder down in another place. This time I had better luck and got two fine sets, one of seven and one of eight. They were pure

white and somewhat rough. During the morning we collected fifteen sets and then left for home. The nests were in holes in the cliffs about ten feet from the top and about three feet back. At the farther end the burrow was enlarged and here a few twigs were gathered together. The average size of the eggs was 1.70 x 1.29 and ranged from four to eight in number.

U. WORCESTER.

Old Nests on New Sites.

Mr. E. J. Dietrich's interesting communication in the January issue reminds me of several cases that have come under my notice where the smaller birds have built new nests on old ones of the previous year of the same species.

Phoebe—Four nests—three under bridges and one in a corn crib.

Anna's Hummingbird—A nest received from California. The new nest was about half the normal height and the line between the two was sharply defined.

Red-winged Blackbird—One nest. This was a three-story affair, being three nests representing as many years.

American Redstart—The nest was placed six feet above the ground in a maple crotch in the thick woods.

Next comes new nests on old ones of other species:

Mourning Dove—The nest was placed on an old Catbird's nest in a hawthorn bush.

American Redstart—The nest was built inside an old Red-eyed Vireo's.

The foregoing are all I can remember from personal observation (excepting, of course, such species as nest in cavities), but while on the subject I take the liberty to mention a nest immediately rebuilt on the same site.

American Goldfinch—The nest was placed in the fork of a small swamp maple in a swale and surrounded by hundreds of other maple saplings of similar appearance. The nest and eggs were taken and just two weeks later another nest and eggs were taken from the same crotch and two weeks later I was surprised to find a third nest with eggs, which were not disturbed and the bird reared a brood.

I also recollect two instances of the nest of one species placed on the site of another.

Wood Pewee—The nest of a Cerulean Warbler was blown down by the wind, leaving only a few dangling strips of weed fibers; this attracted the attention of a Pewee, and she immediately built her nest there.

Cedar Wax-wing—A nest of the Goldfinch was removed with the exception of a small portion of the foundation. The Waxwing must have taken immediate possession, for two weeks later her nest contained four eggs.

Many of the Oologist's readers must have met with similar experiences. Let us hear from them.

J. CLAIRE WOOD,
Detroit, Mich.

Solitary Tattler.

The item regarding the breeding of the Solitary Tattler in Pennsylvania in your March issue was read, not with surprise, but with amusement, for so many of these notes on entirely insufficient ground have appeared during the last thirty years or so of published ornithological observations that I have come to smile rather than swear at the marvelous items. In my time I have learned ? ? ? of Red-throated Diver's eggs from Connecticut, (the wooden nutmeg state), Golden-crested Kinglet's nests from Kentucky, plenty of nesting Parakeets from Iowa, Gray Sea Eagle's eggs

from Minnesota and nesting Solitary Tattlers from Pennsylvania, Illinois, Ohio, New York, and my own state, Michigan. But, upon looking up the matter in all cases there was "no cause of action" and the observations? ? ? went begging and the world moved on just as if Joshua had not told the sun to stand still.

It still remains a fact that the Solitary Tattler is in the habit of going away north to nest and that very few have been found nesting even north of the 50th parallel. This is not written with a view to an idle argument but with the sole aim of calling attention to the necessity of accurate observation.

MORRIS GIBBS, M. D.,
Kalamazoo, Mich.

In Explanation.

Lewiston, Mont.

Dear Mr. Short:—

Some time ago I wrote Mr. Lattin about some old notes which I thought about furnishing him for publication. The first installment appeared in 1892, together with my letter of explanation. By reference to that letter, you will understand that the notes at first are my earliest attempts to break into ornithology; yet in those boyish efforts there are some good points, which may be profitable to future Illinois workers. Sometimes the boy sees more than the man, who has become so familiar with these common things that he overlooks what may be of value to others. The boy occupies a different point of view from that of the man. As the record grows, from year to year, the boy gradually sees with older eyes and gains by experience. If you care to use this record, beginning with its crudities, and continuing until it becomes something of value, I shall be glad to furnish it from time to time. It is a faithful reproduction of my ornithological experience.

Cordially yours,
P. M. SILLOWAY.

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VOL. XXIII. No. 6.

ALBION, N. Y., JUNE, 1906.

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AMERICAN Crossbill, set of four eggs, taken in Montana last summer, for best offer; also Auk, vols. 12 and following, for camera outfit. Lantern slides of this region to exchange for others. P. M. SILLOWAY, Lewistown, Montana.

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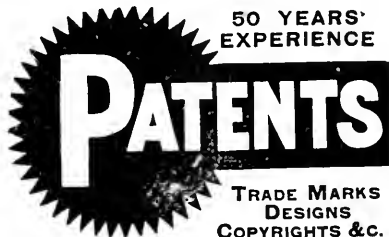
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ALBION, N. Y., JUNE, 1906.

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THE OÖLOGIST,

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FRANK H. LATTIN, Publisher,
ALBION, N. Y.

ERNEST H. SHORT, Editor and Manager.

Correspondence and items of interest to the student of Birds, their Nests and Eggs, solicited from all.

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California's Two Orioles.

Icterus cucullatus nelsoni (Ridgeway)
Icterus bullocki (Swainson).

In the back yard of the 50 x 100 foot lot on which I live in the city of Los Angeles, California, there is a

huge weeping willow tree. Directly on the opposite side of the lot there is a fig tree which bears heavily each year. Because of these two things the orioles, at least a pair of them, come to visit me each season. They are of the Arizona Hooded variety and they came this spring on the 14th day of March, an early record.

Today, they have a nest in the weeping willow, and, while I have not investigated it, I know exactly where it is, and its presence, as well as the vivid-colored birds flashing past my window has roused in me memories of other days when I knew the tribe of *Icterus* better than I do just now.

In Southern California there are two well-known species of these birds: the one just mentioned and Bullock's oriole; while some give Scott's oriole as also being a casual visitor in this neck of the woods. In settled sections, where there are many palm and banana trees, the hooded oriole is the most abundant; among the groves of eucalyptus and pepper trees, and in the sycamores back in the hills, the western subspecies of the Baltimore oriole is everywhere found, replacing the hooded. Both arrive from the south about the same time—somewhere between the middle of March and the first of April, but Bullock's leaves before the hooded, at least my observations during the past ten years seem to indicate that this is the case. September first usually sees the last of the "common" orioles, while the hooded aristocrats frequently remain until well on into October, though

their ordinary date is around September 15th.

In my collection are several sets of each of these birds, though my experience as an egg collector with Bullock's has been very limited, most of my sets having been taken during the past three years at the outside, while I have been collecting eggs of the hooded for all the years of my oological experience. A swaying gum tree top, forty feet or more from the ground, and no larger around than your finger, is not an attractive place for a collector, at least not for yours truly, and there are few boys who will climb to such nests for the small amount of money which the average collector can afford to pay for so common a set. Most of these nests are made of horse and cow hair, while in the sycamores they are most beautiful gray affairs, pensile, of course, as are the homes of all the orioles and woven entirely from the fibers of the inner bark of surrounding trees, mostly willows. The eggs have been so often described as to be well known to every collector east and west, but no two writers give their numbers as the same. The full set of the first laying is almost invariably five, rarely six. I have heard of one set of seven, but like the sets of nineteen and twenty eggs of the Valley Quail, I have to see these sets in the nests to believe they were really laid. They are of the palest gray white, lined, not dotted or blotched with black of the deepest shade. The second set, for the birds often raise two broods, provided they get an early start in the spring, is commonly four eggs, sometimes three, rarely of five.

With the hooded oriole this is all different. The nests are seldom more than twenty feet from the ground, when built in palms and in banana trees, not over eight or ten feet.

When the material is available, they are made of nothing but the yellow fibers of the fan palm. Otherwise they are made of plant down, bark fibers, occasional feathers and general hoi polloi of whatever comes handy. The eggs, so far as I can recall, are never more than four in number, in many cases only three, of a creamy white ground color, spotted, blotched and lined with dark shades of brown, not black. They nest somewhat earlier than do Bullock's but either the time of incubation is longer or else they take longer to rear their young for the broods are later in leaving the nest than are those of Bullock's oriole. Taken all in all, however, the two orioles of the southern end of California are most interesting, both from the standpoint of the naturalist and of the man who loves the beautiful in the animate world.

HARRY H. DUNN.

The Quail Trap.

The Quail Trap, May 30, 1905.—The lilac storm this week destroyed many nests and killed some of the birds. It was of inestimable value to the farmer, relieving his fear of a scanty crop of hay, but to the bird homes in the growing grass it brought havoc and ruin. Strong unmated birds by shifting positions could find some shelter, but mother birds covering eggs in exposed places on the ground and in trees were flooded, chilled, and had their nests torn to pieces. Grass Finches, song and chip sparrows, bobolinks, chebecs, purple finches and larks suffered most.

Not a song or twitter of birds was heard all day Monday near the bungalow. Under her nest in a peach tree, was picked up a least flycatcher soaked and chilled almost to insensibility. It was placed in a box by the kitchen

fire and warmed till it became able to fly out of doors to its home. But another night of pitiless rain finished its earthly career and today I climbed to its perfect nest and looked at the four cold, pink-flushed white eggs. Another tree phoebe's nest near this shared the same fate. Deserted nests of many other small birds near us, with crows pilfering the stale eggs, indicate the fate of the late owners. Overflowed meadows such as we now look out upon are unusual at this time of the year. The two marsh hawk's nests filled with eggs are a foot under water, and the bittern's site though not yet laid in is ten feet from dry land. Mr. Bassett, a neighbor, lost 31 chickens by this storm, but saved the rest of his broods by placing lighted lanterns in his coops. Mr. Snow, another farmer, lost 50 chicks, and Mr. Girouard, 15. A cold May storm always means destruction to young grouse just out of the shell. Irving Paine, a local farmer and a crack shot, says that in the long, cold rain, the young partridges starve to death. Monday night Mr. Paine started a woodcock and four lively young.

The birds of prey are nearly through breeding, with the exception of harriers and the two kinds of accipiters. Great horned and barred owlets are out of the nests in most places, and red-tails and red-shoulders have lusty, meat strengthened squabs able to withstand the roughest weather. We are only two miles from the Massachusetts state line where the raptors appear to be as abundant as around Norwich. S. P. Willard of Millis, Mass., writes to me of his hawking trips this spring and I copy his notes:

March 4, while walking through the heavy woods with my wife, I saw an old nest in a slender pine which had a significant look. Leveling my glasses on it, I saw the head of a great

horned owl. I started right home for my climbers, a two and a half mile walk, came back, and climbed 72 feet to the nest. The owl flew off when I had taken three or four steps upward. I found a nice set of two eggs with incubation begun. The nest was very small for the bird, outside of sticks, and inside entirely freshly lined with dry oak leaves. The nest, I judged to be an old crow's nest, the lining was the work of the owls.

I started a barred owl from a hole in an ancient chestnut tree May 12 by rapping on the trunk of the tree, and on ascending, found two young about ten days old. Did not disturb the young, but will take another peep next year. In April climbed to four fresh sets of three red-shouldered hawk's eggs and to one of four eggs. I knew of two nests of the same species despoiled in some unknown way, and of four more nests in which I trust the young will be safely reared, most of them. Saturday, May 19th, the eggs were so chipped that the young should have been out the next day. May 12, found a broad-winged hawk's nest with two beautifully marked eggs, and on May 18 again went to the nest and found one more hawk's egg, showing signs of incubation. On the same day found a sharp-shinned hawk's nest, not yet laid in, but with two or three feathers adhering to it. I have also located a pair of marsh hawks.

"I don't see but what there are as many birds as ever," is a remark I have heard both in town and country. This is usually repeated by one who never had boyhood's egg-collecting fever (which is a special training) and of course made without records or data. After a close observation in the field for forty years, with copious notes on all local breeding species, I do not hesitate to say that there is a steady and noticeable decrease from

year to year in all resident and migratory birds. Rarely there is a sporadic increase noted, like the rose-breasted grosbeak in Norwich and the protected cave-swallows at Thurston Lillibridge's. But in general a marked decrease all around. I have not space to discuss the cause of the decline, nor time to enumerate all the diminishing species. Sand swallows, martins, chebecs woodpewees, night hawks, kingbirds, crested flycatchers and mourning doves are greatly reduced. Cedarbirds used to breed in the apple trees from the Broadway schoolhouse to Bean Hill. Readers of The Bulletin can remember when there were twenty colonies of purple martins in town. I attribute the decrease wholly to the English sparrows, for some people will not put up and repair martin boxes just to see the never-ending squabble between native box dwellers and the sparrows, and I can recall the time when I found the great upland plover breeding on Plain Hill, Wauwecus, on Prospect Hill opposite Greenville, and on McCall, Blue and Bashan hills in Bozrah. These eggs were like woodcock's in color and markings, but were slightly larger and more uniform. We all can remember when killdeer plover in June and July were breeding and cunningly leading us from their eggs on Peppers Hill, the Cobb farm, Sandy Desert and Brewster's Neck, and farmers all about us were familiar with the wailing cries. Now I know of but four breeding places for this plover in New London county.

Bob White first called to us at the bungalow May 22. We have a dozen varieties of his showier cousins from California and Arizona in the cottage. We also have up here more than a hundred birds that live in glass houses. They will not actively enter into the question of food supply with

the native birds outside, for their bellies are full of arsenical soap. These exotics were all selected for their dazzling plumage, but they do not overshadow our own local birds of beauty. Take the gaudiest sextette in the cases—the cock of the walk, the scarlet ibis, the quetzal, king parrot, mountain lory and red trogon, and in a side by side competitive show how many points would they score over grosbeak, tanager, oriole, redwing, bobolink, and ruby-throat? —C. L. RAWSON in Norwich, Conn., Bulletin.

Comments.

We think to no one cause can be attributed the noticeable decrease of Bird Life in our eastern states.

The English Sparrow is a great factor in driving away Wrens, Martins, Swallows and Bluebirds.

Purple Finches have suffered severely in Western New York and Orioles, Vireos and Bobolinks to a lesser degree from the universal spraying of fruit trees with arsenical poisons during the insect season.

In the vicinity of our large cities the hunter almost annihilates everything from a Flicker up unless they leave before the game season opens and the Italian laborer is with us the season through ostensibly hunting woodchucks and hence, usually tolerated by the farmer, yet ye Editor knows from personal observation that all is game when the son of Italy thinks he is not watched.

Again, over large tracts, deforestation is responsible for a noticeable lack of many species. In Western New York, this alone has greatly reduced the numbers of resident Grosbeaks, Tanagers, Thrushes, Redstart, etc.

And the cat ever increases in numbers in proportion as the human population increases.—Ed.

A Novice's Note-book, (No. 4).

Virden, Ill., March 2, 1882.—Black-birds have been here in numbers for more than a week.

The warbling of the robin and the carol of the bluebird can be heard all day. The bluebird sits on the highest limbs of high trees when singing.

A snipe (probably a killdeer) was heard today, uttering its notes high in the air, the first of the season.

Ducks still continue to go northward in numbers.

March 4.—Meadow larks arrived in numbers last night. They are very common in the fields. Killdeers also arrived in numbers and are quite common along small ponds.

Saw the first butcher-bird (logger-head shrike) of the season. It was sitting in a hedge, uttering its coarse notes.

Also two thrushes, species unknown, in a hedge.

Saw spotted sandpiper on a small pond.

March 18.—Saw first barn swallows of the season. They were flying about the ponds in small numbers and have evidently been here several days.

Saw a jack-snipe. It was probing in the soft mud on the edge of a pond.

Also the first golden plovers of the season. Several flocks passed over, flying from west to east.

Saw the first brown thrasher. It was sitting in a hedge about dusk.

Ducks passed over all day in immense numbers, going both ways.

March 19.—A pair of robins are at work on a nest. Both birds assist in building, the male carrying the dried grass and light material, the female carrying mud and doing all the hard work.

March 21.—Saw the first house

wren this morning. It was hopping about in a hedge.

March 22.—The robins are again at work on their nest. They were stopped by the rain and cold weather of the past two days, but today resumed work.

Also saw the second brown thrasher.

March 25.—Saw the first turtle dove of the season. I heard them several days ago cooing in a nearby orchard, but today the first was seen.

Found two crows' nests in a maple grove north of town. One of them contained four eggs, the other contained five eggs. One of the five was considerably smaller than the others. The crow builds its nest in a large bundle of sticks, about a foot in depth and somewhat more in diameter, the cavity for the eggs being about six inches in diameter and nearly as deep. The nest is lined with the inner fibers of maple bark, horse hair, and any soft substance. Dried grass is also used in constructing the nest. The trees in the grove where the nests were found were small, the highest of the two being not over twenty feet from the ground. The crows made no noise whatever while their nests were being disturbed, and kept out of sight.

March 26.—The pair of robins have finished their nest, and the female has evidently gone to laying, as she has spent most of the last two days sitting upon the nest.

Also saw another house wren.

Cedar birds have all gone away, as none have been seen for about two weeks.

March 27.—Saw first purple martin of the season. It was flying high in the air, uttering its few notes.

Also saw several American creepers during the day.

When the bluebird first appeared, it frequented the tops of tall trees,

sitting on the highest limbs, caroling its notes. But as the season advances it begins to frequent the bird boxes, fence posts, and other places suitable for nesting.

Climbed to the robin's nest already mentioned, and found in it four eggs. No other robins have yet been noticed building in the neighborhood.

March 29.—Purple martins and brown thrashers are arriving in numbers. The song of the thrasher can be heard at all times.

March 30.—Noticed a blackbird building in an evergreen tree within ten feet of the door of a house.

April 1.—A pair of jay birds commenced work on a nest today in a large maple tree.

Saw a blackbird fighting a crow, which was getting the worst of it.

Saw a pair of phoebe birds on the creek, the first of the season. They acted as if they had been here for several days.

Mourning doves are here in numbers.

Also ground robins (Towhee).

Bluebirds are beginning to make their nests. Saw several pairs at work today.

April 2.—The blue jays which began to build yesterday, have stopped work on the nest in the maple and are working on a new nest. Both birds work on it. They use rags, string, and such things, also short hedge sticks. They only work a part of the day, generally stopping about noon. (Perhaps they belong to the union).

Saw a small bird today which proved to be a white-eyed vireo. Saw another later in the day.

April 3.—Saw several wood pewees in town today, the first of the season.

April 5.—Found a bluebird's nest in a hole in a fence post. It contained four eggs. The nest was made of

dried grass, feathers, hair, and fibers laid in the bottom of the hole.

Found a phoebe's nest under a bridge. It was all finished, but no eggs had been laid.

Robins and blackbirds are beginning to build generally.

Found the new nest of the blue jays mentioned. It was in a corner of a porch, not over four feet from the door. I never knew them to build so close to a house.

April 7.—Wood pewees are here in numbers.

Blue jays are building now.

Have seen the robin drive away blackbirds from its nest several times. One does not seem to hesitate to attack two or even three of them.

April 8.—White-eyed vireos here in numbers. Saw as many as four on a small bushy tree today. One of them will go all over a tree by short hops. I approached within six feet of them, but my presence did not disturb them. Several of them sang a few notes. The song is short, but very sweet and pleasing.

Noticed the first fox-colored sparrow. It was in a clump of bushes near the creek.

April 9.—It seems that the robin's nest mentioned on March 27 now contains young, for I saw the old birds carrying food to the nest.

The robin builds its nest of grass and mud. It uses the grass for a foundation, rounding it up with mud a quarter of an inch thick, and lining it with dried grass. Today I found one in a hedge not two feet from the ground.

A pair of blackbirds are building in a large maple in front of our house. They worked yesterday and today. The female does most of the work, in fact, the male does scarcely anything. Once in a while he carries a few blades of grass, and the female puts them in the nest and arranges them.

April 16.—Today examined nests of robin, bluebird, brown thrasher and "butcher bird." The thrasher's nest was made in a hedge, rather low, and was composed of hedge twigs, lined with fibrous roots. The bluebird's nest was in a fence post and contained five eggs. The butcher bird's nest was in the same place where I found one last year, and I have known them to build several years in almost the same place. It is a cozy nest, composed externally of hedge twigs and stalks of weeds, and lined warmly with fibers, feathers, wool, etc.

(To be continued).

A Few Notes.

In your March number there are some notes that refer to previous observations of mine, anent the second nesting of birds. R. F. Miller asserts that he knows of (Ubiquitous) Sparrows, by which he probably means the European nuisance, raising three, "sometimes four and frequently five broods or more" in a season.

While this writer is undoubtedly honest in writing to this effect, he is certainly incorrect and sadly mistaken in thus jumping at conclusions. It is lamentably common for those interested in any study to plunge into print before a point is settled and thus give a wrong impression to others. If a bird lays three sets of eggs in a season, which not infrequently happens, and even with birds the size of a hawk, it does not prove by any means that the pair rears the young in each case. Of all species of birds that are with us the ubiquitous sparrow is the most difficult to study in detail nesting because of its penchant for promiscuous and one might say communistic nesting and incubating. The females not rarely share the common nest and I know of many instances where two sets of eggs numbering from ten to twelve, all told,

have been found, while one pair of birds often drives out another pair and occupies the nest in dispute.

Is it fair in known instances of this kind to assert that this species rears "sometimes four and frequently five broods?" The very point that Mr. Miller says that the species "frequently rears five and more broods," while he has just stated that it sometimes raises "four" broods, causes one to think that he is juggling with figures without fully considering the case. Though I think it just as well not to mention the European Sparrow in our notes on American birds and while I do not wish for argument on the question above, still I do think from careful observations that the notes presented in the last August number of the Oologist are correct and I would respectfully request all to note very carefully before rushing in print and giving a wrong impression.

MORRIS GIBBS.

Kalamazoo, Mich.

The article referred to by Mr. Miller and Dr. Gibbs, appeared in September, 1902 issue of Oologist and Dr. Gibbs' statement appears as follows: "If the birds are *calicly undisturbed*, they will be found to rear but two broods in a season."

Taking into consideration the emphasized words, (the emphasis is mine), it will be difficult to prove that Dr. Gibbs is not right.—Ed.

Grand Rapids, Mich.

Editor Oologist:—

Dear Sir:—Last spring, May 27th, '05, I found a three-story Yellow Warbler's nest in a wild rose bush about two feet from the ground. The lower and middle story each contained a Cowbird's egg and the top story contained four of the Warbler's and another Cowbird's. Is this not very unusual?

[Not so very unusual. This is the common cause of double and triple nests.]

EDITORIAL.

From editorial columns of "Bird Lore," May-June, 1906, F. M. Chapman, Editor:

"No bird-protective law should be without a provision providing for the granting of permits to collect birds for scientific purposes; and, be it said to the credit of the Audubon Societies, they have invariably advocated the inclusion of such a provision when urging the passage of bird-protective measures.

"These permits are usually issued by the State Game Commission, and the present tendency is not only to make it exceedingly difficult to secure a permit but to restrict the number issued.

"The conditions under which a permit may be secured may well be determined by those who give it; but we believe it to be unwise to so restrict the number of permits in force that deserving applicants are denied the privilege of securing specimens legally.

With purposeless collecting we are not in sympathy, but in this country, at least, truly scientific collecting for a definite purpose has never, to our knowledge, perceptibly diminished the numbers of any species of bird, and it seems a poor policy to turn a reputable ornithologist into a law-breaker or law-hater by refusing to accord him permission to pursue his studies within the limits of the law."

This tendency Mr. Chapman refers to was carried to an extreme in California last year and the New York State Commission is pursuing the same policy this year, if our information is correct.

We would join with "Bird Lore" in protesting against the refusal of permits to those who have used them within the limits of the law and

whose researches have yearly added original information of value to our sum total of knowledge in regard to our birds.

The editor of "The Oologist" has in mind, two field collectors, whose work in the most inaccessible location, where none but the most enthusiastic bird lover, with a devotion to his work that made the hardest of work under manifold difficulties a pleasure, would go; has placed the breeding range of one of our warblers many miles north of its recorded limits, and that of another warbler as much further south, and whose knowledge so obtained has been sought by the author of one of our coming bird books as of admitted scientific value, yet I understand that both of these parties have been refused certificates this year on the ground that the State *gained nothing* by their work.

We know of two cats harbored in our near vicinity which destroy four times as many birds every year as these two ornithologists did in pursuing their studies last year, and make practically no return for the damage done, and these two cats are only one hundredth of the cats in this township alone engaged to a greater or less extent in this slaughter.

All honor to the Audubon societies for the good they have done. But when the laws enacted to forward their work are so interpreted that those who are above all others best situated to cooperate in securing an effective enforcement, become law-haters, if not, as Mr. Chapman suggests, actual law-breakers, we think the effectiveness if not the actual continuance of the law is threatened, for, the effectiveness is not the actual con- in no country is the eternal fitness of things so recognized by the masses as in this United States of America.

Publications Received.

- West, XXXII, No. 3; XXXIV, 4.
 American Ornithology, Vol. VI, Nos. 5 and 6.
 Warbler (New Series), Vol. II, No. 2.
 Amateur Naturalist, Vol. III, No. 1.
 Wild Life, Vol. 1, No. 1.
 Bull. Penn. Div. Zool, Vol. IV, No. 1.
 Condor, VIII, No. 2.

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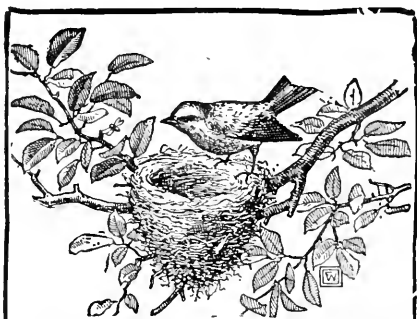
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VOL. XXIII. No. 7.

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THE OÖLOGIST.

VOL. XXIII. No. 7.

ALBION, N. Y., JULY, 1906.

WHOLE No. 228

THE OÖLOGIST,

A Monthly Publication Devoted to
OOLOGY, ORNITHOLOGY AND TAXI-
DERMY.

FRANK H. LATTIN, Publisher,
ALBION, N. Y.

ERNEST H. SHORT, Editor and Manager.

Correspondence and items of interest to the student of Birds, their Nests and Eggs, solicited from all.

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ERNEST H. SHORT, Editor and Manager,
Chili, Monroe Co., N. Y.

From Santa Rosa.

No doubt you have heard of the calamity that befell Santa Rosa and San Francisco, by this time, and would say that I am one of the sufferers from Santa Rosa, having lost my busi-

ness and compelled to go back to my trade, carpentering. One never knows how the best laid plans will terminate. The earthquake was on April 18th, Wednesday, and on the following Tuesday, I had planned to go to Lake County, Cal., or to Clear Lake, in Lake County, for a month's collecting, but instead of a month's collecting and camping trip I have been hard at work ever since the 18th. For the first week helping get out the killed, and after that at my trade. When the store burned, I lost besides the store a quantity of stamps, one-half dozen books of Natural History, my collection being at home. As it is, I have done very little collecting this season. On May 20th, I made a trip down Santa Rosa Creek: found a nest of western flycatcher on the trunk of a large willow that had partly fallen over the water until it was nearly horizontal. The nest was on top side of the trunk, 5 feet above the water, and contained 2 eggs, so left it intending to come back for it when set was complete.

Farther on I found a set of 4 of Salt Marsh Yellow-throat in vines and weeds on bank of creek, the eggs so far incubated that I left them. Still further down I found another set of Western Flycatcher in creek bottom, 8 feet up from ground set on end of a willow stump that had been broken square off and splintered on south side for 12 inches higher. This set was of 4 eggs, incubation slight. About 40 feet from this place I found a set of 4 Long-tailed Chat which I took; next, another set of Western



Photo by Cleckley

NEST AND EGGS OF AM. OYSTER-CATCHER.

Note the eggs are near the central bunch of beach grass.

Flycatcher, about 5 feet up, nest built on top of driftwood that had lodged between two forks of a willow. This nest contained 4 full fledged young.

On going to the first nest the following Saturday, expecting to find a set of 4 eggs, I found a young bird just hatched and the other egg piped, so that 2 eggs completed the set.

On the 20th, I think it was, I found a peculiar set of Bi-color Blackbirds. Three eggs were normally marked but the eggs were of unusual length, the fourth egg was unspotted, less than average width and length and elongated, abnormal shape.

I am expecting to go to the coast after set of Brandt's Cormorants this next Sunday, if weather is favorable. This will be the last chance for me to get any eggs this season, and this calls for a 6 hours' drive over rough, mountain road at night, (expect to go Saturday night so as to be there early Sunday morning and make back trip Sunday evening and to work Monday morning), a hard pull across Bodega Bay and out into the ocean for another mile or so, then an exceedingly dangerous landing on the rock from

the boat with egg cases, etc. Then the boat has to be gotten away from the rocks while the eggs are marked and placed in the cases. Then another landing made to take us off.

H. F. DUPREY.

More About the Solitary Sandpiper.

Edge Hill, Mont. Co., Pa.,
May 9, 1906.

My Dear Mr. Short:—

I notice in the March number of the Oologist your question concerning the identity of *Totanus Solitarius*. In response to this I will say that the record is positive so far as identification goes. While the nest was not found, the size of the young entirely precluded any idea of protracted flight such as would be necessary for a migrant. I am perfectly aware of the caution that is a necessity in the case of a strike of this kind, but being very well acquainted with the Spotted Sandpiper as a summer resident and the Solitary as a migrant, I do not hesitate to give this as a good record.

In addition, it might be entertaining to the readers of the Oologist to throw a little additional light on the status of this bird as a nester in Pennsylvania. This I will endeavor to do in the shape of a few records. I have been informed by Mr. S. N. Rhoads that Mr. Todd has met with it in summer in Western Pa. (Beaver Co.). In Stone's "Birds of Eastern Pa. and N. J.," there is another record of a pair having been observed in summer in the central part of the state. Finally, in Cassinia for 1905, (page 17) there is another record of Solitary being noted throughout the summer in Monroe Co., Pa. This is an exceptionally good "backer" to my record, as the holder of this and myself were pursuing our investigations at the same time within 15 miles of one another, each ignorant of the

others presence.

I offer this, then, as the first record of this bird as a rare summer resident of Pike Co., Pa.

Would be pleased to know if you have any other records.

Yours truly,
RICHARD C. HARLOW.

The Academy of Natural Sciences
of Philadelphia,

June 21, 1906.

Dear Mr. Short:—

The note in your May issue by Dr. Morris Gibbs, reflecting upon Mr. Harlow's observation of young Solitary Sandpipers in Pike Count, Penn., seems to call for a reply. To Dr. Gibbs' plea for the necessity of accurate observation, I heartily agree, but it is a reflection upon the editors of this and other correct ornithological magazines to infer that they are not satisfied with the reliability of contributors, whose articles they publish. Furthermore, it is extremely dangerous to make statements about regions that one is not personally acquainted with.

Mr. Harlow is an exceedingly accurate observer and perfectly familiar with the difference between the Solitary and Spotted Sandpipers. Moreover, he was thoroughly acquainted with the status of these birds in Pennsylvania and of the importance which attaches to his observation.

A number of reliable ornithologists have seen the Solitary Sandpiper in the mountain regions of Pennsylvania in the nesting season. I have myself observed them a few miles south of Mr. Harlow's locality, acting in a way that indicated the close proximity of the nest, though I failed to find it.

As Dr. Gibbs states, most of the birds go far north to breed, but like many other breeders they find along the higher Alleghenies and the Po-

cono mountains conditions just as favorable as in Canada and Maine and some of them stop there to breed.

The Academy museum contains nests and eggs of the Winter Wren, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Brown Creeper, White-throated Sparrow, Goshawk, Red-breasted Nuthatch and other local species from the Pennsylvania mountains and I have little doubt that those of the Solitary Sandpiper will soon be added to the number.

Very truly yours,

WITMEL STONE.

Chili, N. Y., July 10, '06.

Both Mr. Harlow's and Mr. Stone's observations and explanations are welcome at this juncture, and now I'll add my mite. Potter Swamp in the Alleghany Hills of Yates Co., N. Y., is only 80 mi. north of the latitude of Pike Co., Pa.

It has been known to several of the field ornithologists of Central N. Y., that the Solitary Sandpiper could be found in the upper end of this swamp, way into the breeding season for several years back and that the young and old would appear together on the beach of Keuka Lake, 12 miles south, promptly about July 5th.

Personally, I know they were in the swamp May 26th, this year.

They appear singly in the swamp, and are very quiet and unobtrusive at this time, feeding on the partly submerged hummocks, logs and stumps which are all that show above the water in their haunts at this time. If the theory that they habitually nest in old nests of other birds be correct, they would have ample opportunity to indulge this fancy in the almost inaccessible Grackle colonies located there.

Where conditions are so boreal that the Mourning Warbler, Water Thrush and Solitary Vireo will stay to rear

their young, it is not a "far cry" to the Solitary Sandpiper.

Should this Sandpiper breed in this or similar location, they could not do so on the ground as the rapidly shifting water level would absolutely prevent their successfully doing so. Three or four days of successive thunder showers will often raise the water two feet, submerging all but the outskirts and higher hummocks.

ERNEST H. SHORT.

In North Carolina and Virginia.
(*Trochilus colubris*).

Distributed throughout Eastern United States to the Great Plains, north to Canada, in winter south to Cuba, Eastern Mexico and Central America to Uruguay in South America (in general).

This beautiful bit of bird life is a common summer resident in all parts of these states, breeding abundantly in all suitable localities. From the shores of the Atlantic on the southeastern border of the "Old North State," to the rocky sides of the mountains in Northwest Virginia they are scattered without regard to any fixed lines or localities. They seem to abound alike in all sections unless locally unfitted for their habitation.

With the balmy air of April they usually arrive. In the southeastern sections the first ones are usually noticed from the fifth to the tenth of the month, while to the westward they put in an appearance a few days later, arriving about the fifteenth or twentieth in Western North Carolina and about the same time in Southeastern Virginia. In Northern and Western Virginia it is often early in May before they are to be found.

This busy little summer visitor seems to be capable of adapting itself to all kinds of surroundings. For them to inhabit, no forest seems too

deep or dense, no grove too pleasant, no yard too near the haunts of man, no quiet stream too lonely or sad, no city too busy, no swamp too impenetrable. They love to sport alike in the forest and the orchard, nor are they choice as to whether they sip the nectar from the honeysuckle around the house or the wild flowers in the swamp. The old story, that these birds do not gather nectar from the flowers unless on the wing, no longer holds good, for on several occasions I have seen them alight on the petals of the flowers or some nearby twig, and feast at their leisure.

Nest-building begins during the first few days in May and continues until well along in June, or until the first of July. I have seen young yet in the nest in the middle of July, indicating that two broods are reared in a season. This observation is borne out by Nuttall and other writers of authority.

The nest is an exceedingly neat piece of workmanship. It is composed of plant-down with, perhaps, some spiders' webs, shaped into a kind of cottony felt, placed on a limb projecting horizontally or drooping from the trunk. If placed on the drooping limb the nest is built with perpendicular walls, which makes the sides of it away from the trunk much lower than the other. I have often seen nests with one wall protruding half an inch below the other, but they were evenly arranged on top, with neat walls and a neat cup-shaped cavity to receive the eggs. All nests examined by myself were covered on the exterior with lichens, similar in color to that of the limb on which the nest was built. The size of the limb seems to have something to do with the size of the nest, large nests being found on large limbs and small

nests on small limbs. The nest may be placed on the limb of any convenient tree, only a few feet from the trunk, or near the end of some long swinging limb. I have seen them in all kinds of situations, from 8 feet of the ground to 60 feet above terra firma. I have found them on the limbs of beeches, oaks and maples, by the quiet roadway, in the heart of the woods and occasionally in a grove. I have, yet, my first nest to see in a yard, on any kind of a tree.

The number of eggs laid is invariably two. During the latter part of September they bid us farewell and start on their journey to spend the winter.

R. PEARCE SMITHWICK,
Norfolk, Va.

The House Finch.

I realize that to most readers of the Oologist this is a common bird, both as regards its listing among collectors and the low rates at which "Linnet" eggs are held.

But there are many common birds whose habits are passed over by collectors in their rush to find something rare, so that those outside the bird's range can learn little of its life from reading.

Like the poor, the house finch is with us in Southern California, and where it appears in summer there it will be found in winter, though large local migrations are sometimes made. Slightly larger than the song sparrow, dull gray brown in color save for the head, rump and breast of the male, which is crimson, turning into deeper shades as the breeding season comes on, the linnet is one of the few birds of the Southwest which has thoroughly accommodated itself to man's improvements on nature. Here in Los Angeles, a city of at least 180,000 population, the house finches are

found in the main streets, flying from cornice to cornice on the buildings, nesting in the palms of every doorway in the residence section and in the luxuriant rose and other vines which cover houses in the suburbs.

In the city parks the linnets are literally numberless. Almost all California trees are evergreens, at least they shed their leaves by degrees, so that one does not notice the "moult." To such trees in the parks come hundreds of small birds to nest. Among those I have found in one park are Brewer's Blackbird, Mocking-bird, Mourning Dove, Shrike, Bullock's and the Arizona Hooded Orioles, Arkansas and Lawrence's Gold Finches, House Finches, Yellow Warbler, and one of the song sparrows; I do not now remember which.

Of all these, the house finches are the most abundant. One of their favorite nesting places is in a fan palm tree. The leaf stems of the fan palm leave the trunk in such a manner that a round cup is formed between the branch and the tree itself. To line this with rootlets, leaves and horse hair is short work for so industrious a bird, and the result is that frequently a half dozen nests are found on the trunk of one large palm, each presided over by a sober little female, the while her red-headed mate, in company with many of his kind, is rustling worms and bugs on the lawn.

Another nesting place of the house finch is in the leafy tangle of some luxuriant vine such as the Australian pea or Virginia creeper, either of which grows to perfection here. Dead leaves gather in clumps in these fine-foliaged vines and the linnet I have no doubt, seeks to imitate these in his nest making, and so better hide her home from prowling cats and boys.

The eggs in these nests are from

three to six in number, though sets of the latter size are extremely rare, and are pale blue in ground color, dotted, blotched and lined with black of the deepest intensity. Occasionally, almost round or equal-ended eggs of the linnet are found, but, as a rule, they are rounded pyriform in shape. They are laid in February, March, April, May, June, July, August, and, though rarely, a female house finch will be found incubating in September. Most of the birds that lay in the first months raise at least one other brood before the summer is over, and this accounts for the late nesting, in some cases, at least.

Taken from the nest and blown, the eggs of the house finch lose much of their deep blue and take on a gray-green tinge, which is far from beautiful. Fresh, in their home, however, the golden yolk flushing the blue shell with shades of pink, they are most handsome, especially when the nest, as I have seen specimens, is composed of green clover leaves.

H. H. DUNN.

Halæetus leucocephalus.

Do you want to hear our experience with the Bald Eagle? Of course you do; well, here it is:

When I say our experience I mean Mr. W. B. Crispin, of Salem, N. J., and myself, because he and I are one in the egg business.

Our first efforts to secure the eggs of the Bald Eagle in this vicinity was in the spring of 1899, when Crispin went over in Maryland on a prospecting trip. He did not get any eggs that year, but collected some valuable information which he saved into the next year.

In 1900 he went back to Maryland again and this time was late for Eagle eggs. He found a nest with one young one and one added egg. The

addled egg, of course, he saved and so the ice was broken.

In 1901, being fortified with some experience, Crispin went back to his old hunting grounds again, and this time after climbing a tree over 100 feet from the ground, secured 1-2. He rode his bicycle some 30 miles or more to my house and stayed all night. After supper he went to the bathroom to blow the eggs and to hasten the proceeding turned on the hot water spigot and allowed the water to run into the hole.

The water after running a while got very hot and the consequence was it cracked the egg. Being put out over the loss of one egg made him careless with the other and he broke that one with too much pressure with the blower. Thus passed away what should have been a fine set of the Bald Eagle.

In 1902 and 1903 we did nothing towards securing their eggs, but 1904 found us after them again in the same locality. This time we found a new nest, and while we were there at the right time, the birds did not lay.

In 1905, a friend of ours found a fine set of two in New Jersey on Mar. 5th, and about a month afterwards Mr. Crispin took one more egg from the same nest.

This year we made our plans early by getting acquainted with a young man in Delaware who informed us that he knew where some Eagles nested and when the time came he would make an effort to secure the eggs.

After considerable correspondence recently, I was informed that two nests were located and when the birds were done laying, the eggs would be taken.

A letter dated Feb. 27th, was received in which our young man stated he climbed one tree yesterday and secured three eggs. The other one

is terribly high and large and I cannot climb it.

This information was sent to Crispin by me and he immediately made preparations to go after the second set. On March the 2nd, he started with climbers and a camera to look at this terrible tree.

It was an old gum, about three feet in diameter, 60 feet to the first limb and the bark hung in torn strips that tore loose when the climbers were inserted.

The nest was 80 feet from the ground and to master such a tree was an effort that called for all the best qualities of an expert climber. Crispin has never been known to say no, so he secured a rope halter to use as a girdle and started for the nest.

When he peeped over the edge of the nest his eyes opened wide with amazement and his heart beat with joy, for he saw a fine set of 3 eggs. After taking a photograph of the set in the nest he lowered the eggs to the ground and started to descend the tree. When 70 feet from the ground his gold watch parted from the chain and fell, but strange to say, was not hurt in the least, as it struck the ground on its edge and sank into the soft earth.

My set of three are larger than Crispin's and they measure 2.90 x 2.28, 2.88 x 2.30, 2.85 x 2.25. Crispin's average about 2.60 2.08. One peculiarity about the Bald Eagles we found was that if their nest is looked into before they lay, they resent the intrusion and desert the nest.

Two sets of three of the Bald Eagle from our locality and the same year is something to be proud of and we feel well paid for the worry and time we have spent in trying to secure their eggs.

E. J. DARLINGTON,
Wilmington, Del.

Prof. H. A. Ward.

Many of the readers of the "Oologist" may have noted in the daily press dispatches, the fatal accident that befell Prof. Ward in Buffalo on the morning of July 4th.

The editor of the "Oologist" met Prof. Ward only some six weeks before and left him with the impression of a well preserved, hale and wide-awake man for his advanced age.

We note the man who foully ran him down with an automobile, has been held for the grand jury, and whatever their verdict, we believe him guilty of criminal manslaughter.

Prof. Ward, while no longer connected with the Rochester establishment that still bears his name, had only just completed an exploration into the wilds of the upper Magdalena River in Columbia.

During his active and eventful life, he had made collecting trips all over the world for Ward's Natural Science Establishment, Peabody Museum, Field Columbian Museum, etc.

He has taken tons of rare shells, corals and minerals, being an authority on the latter.

Personally, he was a bluff, hearty and genial man, whom it was always a pleasure to meet socially or in a business way.

Notes.

In June issue of "Mineral Collector," we notice the publication (to be continued) of "Mineral Localities Around Philadelphia," giving Vars found. This list covers one of the best eastern fields and should be in the hands of all eastern amateurs.

We have reported by E. W. Campbell (a reliable collector), following records for Luzerne Co., Pa.:

Solitary Sandpiper, resident pair in swamp.

Least Sandpiper, pair with young July 2rd.

Passenger Pigeon, resident pair, reared young.

Mr. Leibelsperger reports a set of 3 catbird from Pennsylvania, giving following dimensions, .54 x .47; .54 x .49; .60 x .51; an unusually even set of runts.

Some time ago we cautioned all against dealing with one, Jas. Collins, of Aberdeen, S. D.

We regret to be obliged to again mention this matter. Investigation seems to point to conclusions that we trust it may not be necessary to print.

Publications Received.

Coin Cabinet, Vol 1, No. 4; Amateur Naturalist, Vol. III, No. 2; Journal Me. Orn. Society, Vol. VIII, No. 2; Wild Life, July, 1906.

Oologist

Editor Oologist:—

There is a colony of birds which nest near my home. They are of the Swallow type with white breast and underparts and grayish-drab back and head. Their nests are built in crevices in the stone wall which lines a creek nearby. They also nest in the holes in the rocks of a bridge and in small drain pipes. The nest is composed of grass and they lay 3 to 7 pure white, fragile eggs. They are constantly flying over the creek in search of insects. Can you tell me whether these are Bank or Rough-winged Swallows?

F. A. HEMPHILL.

These are the Rough-wing Swallow.—Editor.

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VOL. XXIII. No. 8.

ALBION, N. Y., AUG., 1906.

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VOL. XXIII. No. 8.

ALBION, N. Y., AUG., 1906.

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LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN. (*Telmatodytes palustris*) in Philadelphia County, Penn.

The Long-billed Marsh Wren (*Telmatodytes palustris*) is a common summer resident in the vicinity of Philadelphia, along the Delaware river and the tide water creeks and

streams that empty into it, and can be found wherever there are suitable clumps of rushes for them to nest in. This diminutive denizen of our marshes arrive in this vicinity during the last week of April or in the first week of May. Its time of arrival is apparently governed by the condition of the weather, for during a late, backward spring, it arrives later than when the weather condition is more favorable, i. e., an early spring. In confirmation to this hypothesis, which some may doubt and others dispute, as being the true reason of the birds' arrival, suffice it is to say that a backward or late spring retards the rushes' growth in the marshes and never in my experience have seen these birds here before the 'cat-tail or other rushes had attained a height of a foot or more. An early spring quickens the rushes growth and reverses the conditions, for with greater warmth of temperature, we have an earlier appearance of vegetation in the marshes and consequently, the earlier arrival of the birds. These conditions also affect, naturally, the food supply of the birds which consists of insects, their eggs and larvae, etc.

My earliest record of arrival is April 24, 1897, at Frankford, this county, and this bird was seen along tidewater, where they are seldom found, except as in this instance—during migration.

The Long-billed Marsh Wren is blithe and happy upon his arrival—and who ever saw him otherwise—seemingly glad to get back home, and sings gaily upon the first day of his appearance, as however, do the ma-



NEST OF LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN.

Photo by Cleckley, Sandy Point, S. C., May 12, 1905.

[In the photo the bird's head was plainly visible thrust out of entrance at side of nest. Owing to over-printing of photo this hardly shows in half tone.] ED.

jority of our summer residents. It thus makes its presence known and also by its lively, incessant and noisy chattering, chuckling and scolding cries. But one conspicuous feature of his habit is lacking for at least a week after his arrival, and that is his ecstatic flight song. This peculiar aerial flight of song-on-the-wing does not begin, apparently, until the birds have mated. If they are mated upon their arrival, as some authorities believe to be the case with many of our birds, I have never been able to ascertain, as my studies of their charming habits previous to nesting or after their arrival is meagre and far from complete, my negligence being due to other ornithological study at this time.

This is the best time, however, to study them, for the rushes afford them poor hiding places, the green

and growing tubes struggling through the swinging, upright and fallen last year's growth for mastery, being of short height, ill conceal them from the observing student. Among these tubes of tangled growth the birds can be studied with comparative ease, and I have always regretted that I have never taken advantage of such a short opportunity to learn more of these interesting birds' habits.

This is early in May when the struggle for supremacy of the dead and living rushes transpires, which by the way, always ends in a victory for the latter tubes, and at this time let an observer intrude upon the Marsh Wren haunt and flush one of the birds. It will probably fly several feet and perch upon a swaying cat-tail blade or a dead stalk, from which position it will watch the trespasser,

eyeing him in a curious, enquiring sort of manner, with cocked tail and turned head, and during its suspicious inspection of you, it will all the time keep scolding, chuckling and chattering, protesting vigorously against your intrusion. As long as you stand still and motionless, the bird will regard you from its perch, but endeavor to approach, as cautiously as you like, it will instantly "dive" at your first movement into a veritable tangle of dead and living rushes, chattering noisily, and its loud incessant cries will continue until the intruder has departed. And although the bird is invisible, the surreptitious, cunning little elf is suspiciously regarding you from the tangle, keeping a "weather eye" on your movements.

But should the intruder advance and pursue the wary bird, it will run, seemingly mouse-like, and half fly through the rushes, never above them, and the pursuer must need be fleet of foot to approach close enough to flush and make one take wing over the marsh. I have tried several times to do so, but my attempts were always failures. This, however, is a large cat-tail marsh with water over a foot in depth. It is comparatively easy to flush them from small solitary patches and clumps of rushes and make them fly into others.

By the fifteenth of May, or later, according to the backwardness or earliness of the spring, the cat-tail rushes are tall enough for the birds to nest in, and by this time the dominant rushes of the marshes are the living ones that have almost concealed the fallen and fast decaying old year's growth.

Such is the condition of a cat-tail marsh at Richmond, this county, where I have found the secretive Long-billed Marsh Wren nesting in

abundance. And in this marsh they nest earlier than in any other locality in the vicinity of the city, where I have found them.

This marsh comprises about twenty acres of cat-tail rushes, interspersed here and there with calamus and spatter dock, and it is drained by the Delaware river, along which it lies, separated by a bank which carries a railroad. It is almost five miles from the city hall and within the corporate limits of the city, the largest marsh in the northern section of the county. It has been divided into three parts by two intersecting streets and a canal. The streets, however, are unopen, consisting merely of dirt-covered sewers, used by casual pedestrians to and from the river. A large dump on the west side of the river is fast encroaching upon and diminishing its size at an alarming rate, threatening its destruction in two or three years. The cat-tail rushes grow in large and small clumps and patches in water ranging in depth from one to four feet, the ordinary depth of which is a foot.

Most of my studies of the peculiar traits, habits and nidification of the Long-billed Marsh Wren has been made in this marsh, as it is near my home.

As hitherto mentioned, the Long-billed Marsh Wren commences nest building by the fifteenth of May, or later, according to the season, but these birds as a rule are early nesters, and by early June the majority of them have begun.

What a time the birds have nest building! Both birds assist in building the globular shaped structures, and oft' times they have as many as four under construction at a time, and in various stages of completion. Sometimes a pair of birds will build four good nests and select the most

dilapidated looking one of the bunch to raise their young in, but they seldom do so, usually laying in a compact, well-built nest. An instance of nest building recorded in my note-book is as follows:

"Pair of birds worked industriously on three nests for several days, working alternately on each nest until they were finished. During nest building, which was mostly done by the female, the male often ascended about twenty or more feet in the air in a burst of passionate song, which he would finish in the rushes. After the nests were completed, or to be more explicit, after the completion of one, for the two others remained unlined, the bird laid in the chosen nest, and during incubation, the male sang to her except when he busied himself in building another sham nest or shared with her the duty of incubating the eggs."

Some times two nests only would be finished when the female had to lay in one and the male would busy himself by constructing one or two others during incubation, when not eating or singing, though he eats and sings at the same time.

Which sex select the nest sit, if any selection there is, which is probable, I have never been able to ascertain, as only two cases of "nest selection," if I may use the phrase, have come under my observation, and as the sexes are alike, I could draw no important conclusion from them. However, the site chosen, nest building rapidly progresses. Sometimes, according to the whim of the erratic birds; they, or one of them, usually the female, will work incessantly on a new nest, seemingly anxious to complete it, but would quit and begin on another or fly away to feed. Sometimes both birds would industriously work on a nest, but the male usually

would accompany his wife after material and come to the nest with her and while she worked away, he gayly sang, sometimes helping to arrange a rush in the nest. The female constructed the greater part of the nests before she commenced laying, after which her lazy consort built seemingly worthless false or sham nests. Rarely have I seen both birds at work on separate nests, but one instance having been recorded, and the male only placed his material on the nest.

So thick are the rushes in the marsh that observation is with difficulty carried on, and amid the tangled dense mass of rushes mating and copulating, of which so little is known regarding any of our birds, take place, but the concealment afforded by the thick tubes has prevented me from learning any thing respecting these habits and very little of their nesting habits.

A nesting site is usually several closely growing upright cat-tail stalks or blades to which the nest is attached, interwoven with pliable dried or green rushes. Some are loosely and others securely woven to the cat-tails, and in this marsh all nests are over the water, but farther up the river, in the meadows, nests are often found in muddy clumps of calamus and cat-tail rushes. As a rule, in the marsh, nests are 4 and 5 feet up, which is the average height in cat-tail marshes, extremes being one and seven feet. The latter nests are placed in unusually tall rushes, which grow to the height of 8 feet. The birds have no preference, as far as I have learned, for sites or choice, as they nest everywhere in the marsh, often along the edges where their nests are plainly to be seen by every passer-by.

As regards the composition of the nests, some authorities state that mud

is almost always used in the walls, but rightly say that the birds do not gather it for use in their nests, but that it adheres to the dried rushes of which the nests are made, and is thus unintentionally used in its composition.

In this locality, out of a personal examination of over 200 Long-billed Marsh Wrens' nests not one contained any mud, or hardly a trace of it, all being built of clean, dried rushes, leaves, blades, etc.

The "authorities" referred to in the preceding paragraph also give their reason as to the use and utility of the mud in the nests, asserting that it is strength in structure, and serves to keep its conformity or shape. Be that as it may, which seems reasonable, suffice to say that non-mud used nests are as well built and compact as "mud-built" ones and retain their globular form longer. The former nests are liable to become soft and shapeless during a heavy rain, due to the mud in its composition, and the mudless ones will nearly always survive rainy weather and retain their shape. There are exceptions, however, to these cases.

A continued spell of rainy weather affects the incubation of the eggs and often causes the desertion of many nests, as the rain soaks through and renders them uninhabitable, as the walls fall in. The mud-walled nests keep out the water a little longer than the non-mud nests, but once it soaks through it is as bad or worse than the latter nests. Continued rainy weather affects both sorts of nests alike. Those that have no mud in their composition are better built, larger and with thicker walls than the other kind, hence their ability to better withstand the rainy weather.

The nests are built of dried blades of cat tails, calamus and marsh

grasses, which are woven and interwoven tightly and closely together into compact globular balls of various shape and sizes, and they are attached to the stalks or bases of upright rushes by being woven to them and by the green rushes' tops being interwoven into the composition of the nests. In some localities, sound marsh grass is used, but what kind of material the birds use elsewhere I am unable to state from experience. These materials form the outer structure of the nest. The lining consists of fine, soft, dry marsh grasses, cat tails and down, fine dead heads of living cat tails, birds' feathers, often of their own species, usually of Rails, Bitterns and Gallinules, however, and cotton. The latter material they found in the marsh where I had purposely strewn it to ascertain whether they would use it. They did and were probably glad to get it. Some nests had a mixing, little of each, of all these materials. Some are lined exclusively with one sort of it and the like. Mention has been made that the nests are of various shapes and sizes, but the usual shape is oval and the uniform size is 6 inches long by 3 1-2 inches in width. Some of the nests resemble a cocoanut in shape, which is the next commonest. Others are heart shaped and spherical. The entrance, which is a small hole about the size of a nickel five-cent piece, but may be smaller or larger, is almost invariably placed just above the middle of the nest in the side, but may be found in the bottom or top. It is often concealed by cleverly arranged rushes and can be found with difficulty, and sometimes it is so small that it causes surprise and wonder to see how the midget wren can squeeze through it.

The nests are extremely tight and closely woven structures, excluding

any ray of light, heat or cold in their interiors, except through the entrance when that hole is unconcealed. It is made compactly and seems well adapted to withstand and resist the changes of temperature and inclemency of the weather and serve admirably to keep out the dampness, which is a serious and often fatal factor in regard to incubation and young.

Some authorities assert that the number of sham nests built by a pair of birds is from six to eight, but I have never found more than six nests belonging to one pair of birds, the usual number being three or four, occasionally five and rarely six. These sham nests have various other names such as decoy, false and mock nests. In England such nests are called cock nests, under the belief that they are constructed by the male birds, but in the case of the species under consideration, they are built by both sexes. True, the female Long-bill does little work on them after she has commenced incubating, and none to my knowledge, after the eggs have hatched, yet they cannot be called cock nests on account of her share of work on them. Sham or false nest is a better word. Decoy is still better. They mislead many ignorant people, who examine them in the belief that they are worthless and deserted. The majority of such nests that I have examined have been unlined, but otherwise were as well built as the lined ones. Why, I have never been able to find out, nor have I ever been able to ascertain the sense of these sham nests, nor has any person satisfactorily answered this question regarding their uses.

Realizing how imperfect is our knowledge of the incubation of the eggs of this species, I endeavored to ascertain the length of time necessary for the eggs to hatch, but have only

been partially successful, due to the desertion of nests that had been under observation and other causes.

The period of incubation is in a measure controlled by the weather, for during a cold or rainy spell the length of time required for eggs to hatch was shorter than during continued warm or hot weather, when it would be prolonged.

The cause is obvious. It is perhaps, needless to say, for during a cold spell of inclement weather of several days' duration, the bird is compelled by instinct to sit and incubate her eggs closely and oftener, hardly daring to leave them, on account of liability of exposing them to the cold, which would chill and kill embryo. The male takes his turn when the female leaves to seek rest and food. During an excessive warm spell the eggs do not require as much protection and are often left "uncovered" for several days at a time, even when incubation is highly advanced, as the warmth will keep them from getting chilled. The consequences of these natural interferences of nature cause the incubation to vary, warm weather prolonging and cold or inclement weather shortening it. As near as I have been able to ascertain, the length of incubation has varied between ten and twelve and a half days. The shorter time when the weather was cold or inclement and the longer when it was excessively hot, with high humidity and very little rain.

From these conclusions, incomplete as they are, I infer that the weather effect asserts its influence upon incubation, which is an important factor in regard to all species of birds, at least all that I have studied. The results of my observations have demonstrated that cold and inclement weather will shorten incubation from one to two days, and hot weather pro-

long it equally as long.

Another important factor that has, perhaps, to be taken into consideration regarding the period of incubation of the birds' eggs is the peculiarly constructed nest. The eggs repose and are almost hidden in a thick, warm, downy lining, and are never affected by or exposed to the cold or inclemency of the weather, as are the majority of birds' eggs, the Turdidae for instance, and consequently incubation will be assisted during the bird's absence by the heat of the sun's rays on the nest, etc. Be that as it may, the temperature of the interior of the nest seldom falls below 70 degrees I believe, but this is not the result of personal experiment, as I could never procure the right kind of a thermometer with which to obtain the temperature, but I venture to say that it will be found between 70 and 80 degrees Fahrenheit, according to the hotness of the weather when temperature is taken.

If the sun's rays help to assist incubation of covered grebes' eggs, as some authorities believe to be the fact, during the bird's absence, why should it not also assist those of the Long-billed Marsh Wren? But I fear some would say that the grebe's eggs are covered with decayed vegetation, which contains several degrees of heat, which is lacking in the globular Marsh Wren's nests, and accounts for the assistance rendered incubation.

True, but did I not say that the Wren's eggs repose snugly in a soft, warm, downy lining, protected by thick walls and the interior with a temperature of 70 to 80 degrees? But I fear the incredulous will say that these degrees of heat are insufficient to assist incubation, and quite rightly, for I think that incubation is not assisted by any artificial means. The vegetation that covers grebes' eggs

does not contain sufficient degrees of heat necessary to assist incubation, no more than does the downy lining and thick walls of the Long-billed requires 98 degrees of heat, a continuous supply, to hatch eggs, if I remember correctly, and—but this has nothing to do with this paper; to return to the subject.

The Long-billed Marsh Wren rears two broods of young in a season, the first brood in June and the second in July or August, if the nests are undisturbed, but should the first and second sets of eggs be taken, they will lay a third; if these, a fourth; and these, a fifth, which is the highest number of clutches I have ever made a bird lay to my knowledge. When the first set is taken, the bird lays her second complement generally in one of her sham nests, with some exceptions, and while she is brooding them the male constructs one or two more, thus when a pair have been robbed several times they will own eight or nine false or sham nests.

The earliest I have found fresh eggs was May 22, 1906, and have seen young barely capable of flight on August 16, 1897. Wilson says that "the young leave the nest about the twentieth of June," speaking of the Marsh Wren in Pennsylvania, which a writer in Cassinia, Mrs. Clarence J. Hunt, things exceptionally early, as it undoubtedly is compared with his incomplete observation of these birds' habits. The young of the first brood leave the nest between the twentieth and thirtieth of June, rarely earlier, the twenty-fifth of the month being the minimum time, as far as I have been able to ascertain. They are cared for by their parents for about a week longer, before being able to care for themselves, but when fully capable of shifting for themselves, the female lays her second set. My experiences

respecting these latter nests and sets are not very satisfactory and can give no definite information regarding them.

The young marsh wrens usually frequents the borders of the marsh, where they allow any intruder to approach quite close, unsuspiciously

RICHARD F. MILLER.

Philadelphia, Pa.

(To be continued)

Western Black Phoebe.

(*Sayornis nigricans semiatra*.)

A pair of these interesting little fly-catchers have made their home here for two seasons. They are here for the entire year except for about two (2) months in the winter. They return from their sojourn about the first week of the year.

They perch on the cone of the barn, on the windmill, on the clothes line, on the limb of a dead fig tree near the barn. From these places they send out their cry of pewee! wee! wee! constantly and give their tail a bob at every cry.

At night one of them roosts on a large spike nailed into the side of the house under the veranda roof; the other one roosts in a last year's nest. They are quite helpless at night. One night climbed up among the rafters to catch some pigeons and placed my hand into the nest and caught one of the Phoebes. He made several faint squeals and then tried to get a hold on my hand with his bill. When I let him go he fluttered down into the corner and was still there when I left.

On March 7th they began to build their home. It was a cup-shaped affair plastered against a beam of the barn. It was made of pellets of mud mixed with straw and hair. On the 11th it was finished, except the lining. For the next few days they carried

hair and straw up to the nest. They seemed to be in no hurry; they made a trip to the nest, then set in the sun on the fig tree or clothes line waiting for some lunch—in the shape of insects—to fly by. They suddenly, with a cry, they would dart out, you would hear the snap of their beak and they would be back in a twinkling. I have yet my first time to see an insect escape them. They sometimes make a second dart, but not often. They invariably return to the place they flew from.

On the 20th the nest contained one egg, then one little pearly egg was deposited every day until there were five. Four were pure white, but the fifth was specked with red spots.

I took the set of eggs and just four days later a pair of house finches relined the nest and have raised a brood of these little pests.

But to return to the phoebe. They went to the end of the barn and in just nine days they had constructed another nest very similar to the first, except not as large. In this they laid five eggs, one of which had four or five reddish specks. As I had a chance to trade a set I also took these. Another pair of house finches took charge of this nest. For a little while they took "it easy," then they went to the windmill (which is supported by four 4x6s) and up close to the platform, they made a new nest in which four eggs were laid. They have now hatched and are ready to fly.

W. J. CHAMBERLIN.

Snowy Owl South of 40th Degree of Latitude.

In the April issue of the "Oologist," Mr. Geo. L. Fordyce, in the discussion anent the early visits of the Snowy Owl, asks for information regarding the occurrence of this huge bird near the 41st parallel of north

latitude. I reside 5 miles north of Philadelphia, very near the 40th degree of latitude, near the Delaware River, on whose meadows, the Snowy Owl is almost annually taken, the majority of the birds being shot in November. The reason that so many are seen and shot in this month was explained in the April Oologist by Mr. Isaac Hess, whose theory is undoubtedly correct.

The severity of the weather has nothing, apparently, to do with the southern migration of this erratic Arctic Owl, for the occurrence of the few individuals seen and shot in this vicinity—North Philadelphia—did not follow or precede any sudden change in the weather to my knowledge. November last was a comparatively mild and warm month, in fact, the winter was an unusually warm one, yet the Snowy Owl was more common here than during the cold, severe winter of 1904-05. Will somebody explain the reason? Is not the erratic southern movement as much of a mystery as the migration of our summer birds?

The majority of the Snowy Owls shot here are in the spotted plumage, in fact, snowy white individuals are extremely rare in collections in this city, none to my knowledge have ever been taken in North Philadelphia.

Consulting my records, I find the following entries concerning the taking of the Snowy Owl in Philadelphia and vicinity in November, 1905:

Two Snowy Owls shot by gunners on Bridesburg Meadows, Philadelphia, November 20; both spotted birds. All others also were spotted for that matter.

November 20-22—Two Snowy Owls near Magnolia, Camden county, N. J., shot by a rabbit gunner. This locality is below the 40th parallel of latitude.

November, after 25th, exact date

not ascertained, Snowy Owl captured by a gang of Italian laborers at Essington, Delaware county, Pa., 10 miles south of Philadelphia, and mounted by a local taxidermist. By the way, this taxidermist has mounted birds for over forty years, including several Snowy Owls, and he informed me that he had never seen any nor mounted only the spotted ones.

Besides these records I have others, dateless and meagre, of the taking of the Snowy Owl in Eastern Pennsylvania. One was shot early in April, 1905 in the Schuylkill Valley, near Reading, Pa., which is remarkably late for this northern bird to be found.

In conclusion, let us hear from others regarding the occurrence of the Snowy Owl south of the 40th degree of latitude.

RICHARD F. MILLER,
Philadelphia, Pa.

Publications Received.

"The West," June, 1906, "Mineral Collector," Vol. XIII, No. 4, Condor, Vol. VIII, No. 4.

Among items of general interest in last "Condor," we note the unfortunate accident to Mr. Finley, the specialist in bird photography on San Clemente Is., while locating nests of Bald Eagle, which, while of a painful nature, fortunately was not fatal.

Also Mr. Ridgeway's agreement with Mr. Swarth, as to the Spurred Towhee matter mentioned in these columns a short time ago.

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VOL. XXIII. No. 9.

ALBION, N. Y., SEP., 1906.

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CHRIS P. FORGE,

Carman, Manitoba.

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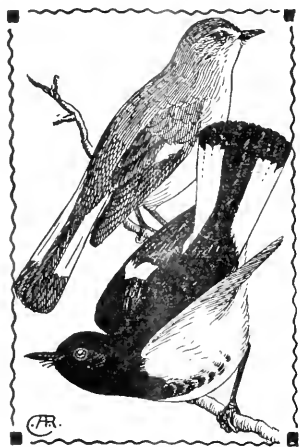
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VOL. XXIII. No. 9.

ALBION, N. Y., SEP., 1906.

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THE OÖLOGIST,

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FRANK H. LATTIN, Publisher,
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LONG-BILLED MARSH WREN.

(*Telmatodytes palustris*) in Philadelphia County, Penn.

By R. F. MILLER. (Concluded).

watching him from an exposed stalk or blade of a rush, or a weed, with chuckling or chattering cries. Their

fearlessness often leads to their death from boys who cannot resist the temptation to "heave" a rock or stone at the brave bird.

The eggs of the Long-billed Marsh Wren range from five to nine in number, according to Davies, but seven is the highest number I have ever found in a set, out of an examination of over 300 nests. Five or six is the usual number, sometimes four and rarely seven. But larger sets, as Davies says, have been found. A set of ten I recall having been heard of.

The eggs vary greatly in shape, size and coloration. Shape includes ovate, elongate, short-ovate, broad-ovate, elongate-ovate, sub-spherical, elliptical-ovate, etc.; color usually a dark chocolate with considerable variation, the eggs being thickly marked with dark brown, which gives them a uniform chocolate color. Some have been seen streaked with quite distinct longitudinal lines of pale brown on a shell of whitish; others lightly marked with brown of various shades, with wreaths on large and small ends; some blotched and some almost immaculate. A set of four in my collection contain two uniform chocolate eggs and two almost immaculate ones, which look like eggs of the Maryland Yellow-throat, except that they are more elongate in shape. The average size of a large series (over 200 eggs), was .66x.43 inches with considerable variation, some almost runts. Although never having the good fortune or luck to find a perfectly immaculate set. Such sets do exist in collections, and from what I can learn they are quite distinct in shape from the white eggs of the Short-billed Marsh Wren, whose



Photo by E. Reinecke, Buffalo, N. Y.
Nest and Eggs Am. Bittern.

(See article in this magazine.)

eggs are shaped like quails (*Colinus virginianus*) and this alone would serve to identify them from the immaculate ovate shaped eggs of the Long-bill, should the bird be absent, which is hardly probable.

The Marsh Wren can be heard singing at any hour of the night as well as day, no matter whether it be clear or moonlight, overcast or cloudy, such a restless sprite of the marsh is he that he can not or will not be quiet. The song heard on a quiet night, mingled with the hoarse croakings of frogs, the squawks of *Nycticorax* and the weird, quivering screech of *Megascops*, seem to possess a certain unexplainable charm, quite unlike and different from when heard in the daytime. This is perhaps a fallacy due to the quietness of the night and like the night song of the Chat, seems different than it usually is on account of the surroundings, etc. Whether it performs its aerial song or ecstasy flight during the night I have never been able to ascertain.

The food of the Marsh Wren consists of insects, their eggs and larvae, which they find in abundance in the marsh. Have seen them devour and feed their young caterpillars of a white moth about an inch in length, that are quite common in the marsh.

The Long-billed Marsh Wrens depart for the south in October, by the twentieth they are gone, except, perhaps a straggler.

The foregoing observations, incomplete though they are, constitute my experience with this active, erratic and restless bird, which will some day perhaps be completed.

(Concluded).

R. F. MILLER.

Ordinary natural heat in any degree effects incubation but little in birds' eggs in our climate.

I have seen two sets of eight and one of ten eggs.

There is no difficulty in distinguishing between immaculate sets of Long-bill and the eggs of the Short-bill Marsh Wren.

I have never seen an entire immaculate set of Long-bill, but the odd eggs I have examined differed much in shade of color and appearance.—*Ed.*

From Warren Co., Penn.

Mr. E. H. Short:

Dear Sir:—I have read with much interest the notes on the Solitary Sandpiper in Summer in Penna.

Here is Northwestern Pennsylvania, although the original forest of pine and hemlock is badly cut off and has given place to mixed second growth, brush and barrens, we still have many of the more northern breeders.

The Magnolia Warbler is a quite common breeder and although in the woods but little this spring, I saw fully a dozen nests. The Black-throated, Green, Canadian, Chestnut-sided Warblers and Redstarts, Junco, R. B. Grosbeak, Purple Finch and Savanna Sparrow all breed regularly, while the Solitary Vireo, Wilson's, Hermit and Olive-backed Thrushes, Mourning, Black-throated, Blue, and Blackburnian Warblers and Winter Wren are regular breeders, but are scarcer.

I have the eggs of the Brown Creeper, and occasionally find a pair in summer. Also have the nest and eggs of the Olive-sided Flycatcher, which occurs in this region in the mountains as a rare summer resident.

The Crossbill is still found here in summer in the heavy forests of hemlock and possibly breeds. I have found several nests of Yellow-bellied Woodpecker high up in tall stubs and inaccessible to me. Have also noted the Pine Siskin in summer and this past season in Clearfield county.

on May 25th, in a large tract of virgin forest, in the mountains, I shot an adult female Goshawk that was trying to drive a Grouse out of a laurel bed. This bird showed all signs of being a breeding bird and no doubt had a nest in some of the big hemlocks.

We also have plenty of Canada porcupines, varying hares, woodland jumping mice and other of the more northern mammals.

This summer I have seen a Solitary Sandpiper at different times since the middle of May, but think it is alone, as I have never been able to see its mate. Last summer a pair were about but I could find no nest nor did I see any young.

But with the conditions I have named and the already long list of the more northern breeders, the occasional breeding of other northern birds in this as well as other boreal regions of Pennsylvania may be looked for.

Yours sincerely,

R. B. SIMPSON,

Warren,

Warren Co.,

Pa.

Ruby-throat Hummer.

Dear Mr. Short:—

In the July issue of the Oologist I read with interest Mr. Smithwick's article on the Ruby-throat (*Trochilus colubris*). In closing he speaks of never having found a nest in a yard.

Although I have only had the fortune to examine two nests, both of these were placed in shade trees.

The first one of these was placed on a cone of a larch tree. It was about 8 feet from the trunk, near the end of one of the long streamers, and 25 feet up. This nest was within ten feet of the house.

The second nest was built in a large shade tree, about 100 feet from

the residence. This pair of birds entered the green-house on the estate in order to procure the down off a certain species of fern for building purposes. I did not examine this nest in situ, but the record is authentic.

I do not doubt that the reason I have not found more nests is because I have not looked in the proper locations, and that Mr. Smithwick is right in saying they generally nest in the forest trees.

Yours very truly,

D. E. HARROWER.

American Bittern.

We have excellent localities near Buffalo where a good patient observer can learn a great deal about the habits of the American Bittern. They arrive here in the latter part of April. Before selecting a nesting site, the male is very noisy, especially before dark sets in up to midnight. The queer call of the male during the mating season almost equals that of a bull, something like "Up-rump," and can be heard for at least a half mile, and to accomplish this the male stands on both of his feet and places the bill in the water, and by jerks produces the noise. After the selection of a suitable spot for the nest, both birds construct the same, in some instances on level ground outside, but near the swamp. Others place their nest on a platform constructed of dry and coarse water plants, as tules, sedges, etc., from 12 to 18 inches above the water in the swamp. When completed, the female starts on the duties of life, laying from 4 to 6 eggs, from light brown greenish to a dark shade of brown. They also vary greatly in size. When the nest is placed among the tules and sedges of a swamp, the male in visiting the female alights from 15 to

25 feet from the nest, and in coming and going to the nest, a regular path can be seen by close observers, which also makes it easy to find them.

In this locality, we generally find full complements of eggs from the middle of May to the first week in June. The picture was taken June 3, 1906.

EDWARD REINECKE.

[We have never seen a very good word for the color of the egg of the American Bittern. Personally, we prefer the compound Greenish-drab, as nearest to the unfaded color of the fresh egg. They seem very careless as to date of breeding. Nests are often found with fresh sets up to July 10th.—*Ed.*]

Chesterfield County, Va.

On the 31st of last May, I took a trip down the James River, six miles below Richmond. Several years' experience had taught me that this locality, although not very thickly populated, was the best place in this vicinity to look for eggs.

I rode on the electric railway as far as possible, and got off within a mile and a half of the river. On walking towards the marsh, I passed along a solitary road through a young pine woods, and before I had begun my search, my eyes fell upon a nest suspended in between several dead weed-stalks, eight inches from the ground, under a small pine bush. After ascertaining the nest contained four eggs, I quietly awaited the birds, and just as I suspected, the peculiar note of the Acadian Flycatcher was soon heard in a nearby pine.

Upon blowing the eggs I found two of them perfectly fresh, while the other two were nearly incubated; but after some careful work, I blew the entire set without injury. This is one of the peculiarities of this species,

—to lay again after the first set is half over, and the average number is two, often three, but this is the first set I have ever collected or seen containing four. The nest was also one of the best constructed and most artistic I have ever seen.

A little further on I noticed some old tin cans had been dumped among some briar bushes overhanging a stream, and in an old rain-spout joint, which had been battered in at one end, and lay horizontally on top of a briar bush, I saw some moss and leaves extending from the open end. As I reached for it, a Carolina Wren flew off, and I discovered it contained four fresh eggs, the nest being lined with moss, feathers and horse-hair. I had just a few moments before taken a similar set from a decayed stump two feet from the ground, containing five fresh eggs, though not as large or as well marked as the set of four. I found five nests of the Yellow-breasted Chat in all stages of incubation, besides several other commoner varieties, but did not collect anything more until I got to the river.

In the cat-tails along the marshes, I counted no less than 25 eggs of the Redwing, but did not take any except a well-marked set of 5. Most of the nests contained three, many four, but this was the only set I discovered containing five eggs.

While looking for these nests I came across a beautifully marked set of 5 eggs of the Swamp Sparrow in the same clump of cat-tails containing 2 Redwing's nests. After a little careful searching, I discovered two other Swamp Sparrow's nests containing four eggs each. These eggs were somewhat larger and handsomer than the first set, and were all within a few feet of each other.

A week later I visited the same locality again and found another set of

four and two more sets of five of this species. There is a great diversity in the way the nests are constructed. Some are deep and lined with grass and horse hair, while others are constructed entirely of roots, and when removed from nesting sites are so frail that they easily fall to pieces; and strange to say, every set I have ever found, was perfectly fresh and always contained full complements.

I have found nearly a dozen empty nests, many containing broken shell, and I think I am right in saying that half the nests each season of this species are destroyed in some way, or are washed away by the high water after a heavy rain. Consequently, the Swamp Sparrow cannot increase rapidly, and will probably become scarcer each year, although they lay two or three sets each season. In my series of eight sets, sets of four and five would be more common. I have never seen a set of six collected in Virginia.

THOS. SEMMES, Jr.

[If this nest mentioned was really that of the Acadian Flycatcher, the situation would be unique. The nests of this bird are usually attached to forked twigs, well out on lower limbs of trees in open spots or along roadways and at outer edge of woods. —Ed.]

Spreading Dried Lepidoptera.

From many comes the query: "How can we spread the dry butterflies as commonly received in papers?"

The quickest way I have found, and entirely satisfactory, is as follows:

Take a strip of cotton cloth, pure white and ALWAYS cotton. Colored cloth will stain your specimens and they will stick to woolen or silk fabrics.

Soak the cloth thoroughly and wring out surplus water. Fold cloth on wide

board two thicknesses and lay on your specimens.

Now continue to fold the cloth back and forth over them about four thicknesses deep and set aside for 24 hours.

A good, practical and cheap spreading board is made as follows: Take a soft pine board 8 inches wide and cut a groove in the center the entire length. It is well to have two boards, one with a narrow groove, say 1-8 inch wide and one with a 3-8 inch groove.

If you want it nice cut the groove extra deep and fill in bottom with strip of sheet cork, but if your pine is the soft white pine, this will not be necessary.

When the butterflies have laid 20 to 24 hours, according to size and time they have been dried, they should be pliable enough to relax. This is easily ascertained by trying one.

If you intend to mount on pins you need the regular insect pins, but if you are spreading for glass top mounts, any pin not too heavy will do, as even a brass pin is easily removed from a fly that has once been thoroughly dry.

Pin the fly through the thorax securely in the groove of proper width to accommodate its body. Take a pair of spring forceps and carefully press wings down to board, one side at a time. Pin a strip of smooth paper across this side when down. Work the wings out to proper position and fasten strip of paper firmly to remain until dry. Repeat same operation with the other side and then with antennae.

The antennae are often lost on papered flies. With a little practice you will find it easy to spread 12 to 20 at a time and you will lose very few.

S. H. E.

A Novice's Note-Book—No. 5.

Virgen, Illinois, April 20, 1882.—Kingbirds appeared today, several being seen on the telegraph wires along the railroad in town.

April 21.—Several wood thrushes were seen about the hedges near town.

April 22.—The first Baltimore Oriole appeared. It was uttering its notes in the top of a maple tree in town.

April 25.—Yellow warblers appeared in numbers. Saw a pair of kingfishers along the creek near town. Also sand martins or bank swallows along the creek, digging out holes in the high clay banks.

April 28.—Maryland yellowthroats appeared in numbers. They are very common along the hedges. The catbird appeared, the first being seen about dusk in town.

April 29.—Found a nest of the chickadee or black-cap titmouse, in a hole in a post along the railroad. It was composed of rabbit hair woven together, forming a very snug and cozy nest. It contained six eggs, of a white color, finely dotted with reddish brown. Also saw another pair of chickadees excavating a hole in a fence post in town. In both instances the hole was about six inches deep. Yellow-birds, or thistle-birds, (goldfinch) about in numbers.

Found a nest of the butcher-bird containing six eggs, the most I ever found in one nest. There is a great difference between this nest and the first one I found. The last one is a very poor affair. It was built in a low thorny tree, composed of hedge sticks and lined merely with dried grass. The eggs also were not arranged around in the nest, but were in two rows with three in each row. These birds evidently belonged to the poorer class of butcher-birds.

May 4.—Found a dove's nest in the corner of a rail fence about three feet from the ground. It contained two eggs. The first orchard oriole, a male, was seen. Saw a butcher-bird at work on a nest, gathering fibers from a dead hedge branch.

May 5.—The notes of the Baltimore oriole can be heard almost constantly during the day, from the tops of the maples and other trees.

May 6.—Bobolinks have been about the low pastures in small flocks for several days, probably appearing about May 2. Recognized the first white-crowned sparrow today.

Found a nest of the "chicken hawk" (Cooper hawk), in the same maple grove in which I found the crows' nests. It was an old crow's nest, composed of maple sticks, and scarcely lined at all, and of hardly any depth. It contained one egg, freshly laid, of a light blue color. The old bird fluttered off the nest as if wounded, and I saw nothing of her while I examined the nest, but an old crow flew about overhead making a great outcry.

May 7.—A nest of a yellow-hammer was found in a hole in an apple tree, containing six eggs. It used the same hole last year. (As I remember it 20 years later, I can't see where I got authority for the foregoing statement. P. M. S.)

May 8.—Witnessed a fight between bluebirds and martins for possession of a box in which the bluebirds had located. The bluebirds drove the martins away after a sharp conflict.

May 10.—The Maryland yellowthroat frequents low bushes and the bottoms of hedges. Saw several redstarts, the first I have ever seen. Also the first rose-breasted grosbeaks, flying about in the woods. Saw the first indigo bird of the season. Saw bluebirds and martins peaceably occupying a box together. Goldfinches

mating now, and flying about in pairs. Ground robins building nests. Young robins flying about.

May 14.—The blackbird uses wool in making its nest, working it into the framework but not using it for lining; for lining it uses dried grass and hair. It also uses dried grass stalks and mud in building its nest.

May 15.—A Baltimore oriole was at work on a nest about 7 p. m. The nest is out at the end of a large limb in a maple tree.

May 17. The brown thrasher lays its eggs early in the forenoon, always. Rain-crows, or yellow-billed cuckoo, in the woods, but have seen none in town yet.

Found a kinkfisher's nest along the creek, in a high clay bank 12 or 14 feet high. The nest was in a hole about a foot below the surface of the ground. The hole was about four inches wide and three inches high, and ran back nearly four feet, where it opened out into a cavity about ten inches wide and as many high, somewhat oven-like. The eggs, six in number, were laid on a bed of fish scales and pieces of shells of crayfish. The eggs were white. The old birds never came near while I was digging into the nest.

A pair of wrens are building a nest on a window sash between the glass and the blinds. They go in and out through the shutters.

P. M. SOLLOWAY,
Lewistown, Mont.

Mr. E. H. Short:—

I am informed by good authority that after a severe wind storm, a man picked up two half bushels and one tub full of English Sparrows that had perished in the storm. They were under trees. A telephone wire was near.

Is this not comparable to some fish stories? Only this is a true story.

C. W. PRIER

Publications Received.

Penn. Div. Zoology Bull., No. 3, Vol. IV.

"The Warbler," Vol. II, No. 3.

"The Amateur Naturalist," Vol. III, Nos. 4 and 5.

Me. Orn. Soc. Journal, Vol. VIII, No. 3.

"The Condor," Vol. VIII, No. 5.

The Bobolink Article.

The best article on the Bobolink conforming with our conditions given in the last Oologist was submitted by C. S. Prescott, of Lynn, Mass., who receives a free 3-year subscription. The article with half-tone and editorial comments will appear in October issue. We want similar articles on Brewer's Blackbird, Say's Phoebe and Mourning Dove. Who will submit manuscript? See conditions in Aug. '06, "Oologist."

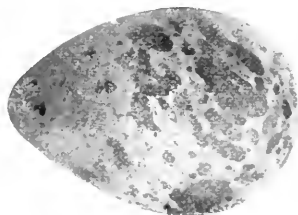
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Yours truly,

F. A. H.

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Old Squaw, n-8	1 40
Emperor Goose, 1-3	6 00
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VOL. XXIII. No. 10. ALBION, N. Y., OCT., 1906. WHOLE No. 231

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233	"	Dec., 1906
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THE OÖLOGIST.

VOL. XXIII. No. 10.

ALBION, N. Y., OCT., 1906.

WHOLE No. 231

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SIBERIAN MAMMOTH.

Body of Prehistoric Monster Complete
at St. Petersburg—Found Entire in
a Grave of Ice.—Animal Was Killed
Thousands of Years Ago.

Actual district in which it was

found, 67.32 north latitude, 151.33 east longitude.

Hair, average length, 7 in.

Wool, yellow under hair, 5 to 10 centimetres thick.

Tail with long hair at the end resembling a buffalo's.

Sex of mammoth, male (young).

Flesh was treated with arsenic, sewn up in cowhide, and conveyed to St. Petersburg in a frozen state.

Actual bodies of mammoth previously seen in 1799 and 1846, but never before wholly rescued and preserved.

The huge body of a Siberian mammoth which was discovered in the summer of 1901, has now been erected in the museum of the Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg. The unique interest of this discovery lies in the fact that though many fossil remains of mammoths have been found and other preserved bodies of mammoths seen, no body so complete as this one has ever been brought home to civilization. The hide, hair, eyes, flesh and bones of the mammoth brought home by Dr. Otto Herz are all marvelously preserved by a set of circumstances similar to those which have given us the actual feathers of the extinct moa bird and the bony hide of the mylodon.

In this case, according to the London "Sphere," which publishes the first accurate description and photographs of the mammoth, the perishable flesh has been preserved by means of almost perfect freezing and "cold storing" process. When first seen by the Cossack Jawlowsky, the mammoth was nearly covered with

ice, and it was owing to a slight melting of the surface enabled him to see the strange hoary relic of a vanished age. The discovery was promptly announced at St. Petersburg by way of Yukutsk, and Dr. Otto Herz of the Imperial museum was immediately sent with a numerous party to procure, if possible, the body entire. To accomplish this he was given a company of Cossack troopers commanded by a lieutenant and fifty horses for transport. A tremendous journey over trackless mountains and swamps was undertaken, and the spot finally reached. To quote Dr. Herz's own words, he says:

"We were at a loss to proceed further, for the maps of the district are not detailed, and we found ourselves in the midst of a vast number of exactly similar ice mounds. Finally, my nostrils detected a strange odor, and it occurred to me that it might be the flesh of the monster which had become uncovered and was decomposing. By dint of walking in the direction whence the smell seemed to come I finally located the grave. In my excitement I ran the last mile of the way, against the fast increasing stench. At the grave I found a faithful Cossack, who for fifty days had stood guard over the carcass at the command of his superior officer. He had covered it entirely over with dry soil to a depth of three feet, but even through this protection the smell made its way."

Dr. Herz who took the photograph reproduced above, describes the long hair and thickness of hide of the mammoth and how the stomach was found full of undigested food. The attitude in which he was found shows that he met his death by slipping on a slope, for his rear legs are bent up so that it would be impossible for him to raise himself. Dr. Herz writes:

"The impromptu grave into which

the animal was plunged was made of sand and clay, and his fall probably caused masses of neighboring soil to loosen and cover him completely. This happened in the late autumn or at the beginning of the winter, to judge by the vegetable matter found in the stomach; at any rate, shortly afterward the grave became flooded, ice following. This completed the cold storage, still further augmented by vast accumulations of soil all round—a shell of ice hundreds of feet thick inclosed by yards of soil that remains frozen for the greater part of the year. Thus the enormous carcass was preserved for how long no one knows through hundreds of centuries perhaps, until not so many years ago some movement of the earth spat forth the fossil mausoleum, leaving it exposed gradually, the ice crust wore off and revealed to the passing Cossack the long hidden treasure."

The mammoth whose appearance in the flesh has been so wonderfully preserved, appears to have died out completely before the advent of what are known as neolithic times. Thus his remains (teeth and bones) are found along with very old human remains of the early stone age, and a life-like and unmistakable engraving of a mammoth has recently been discovered in the Grotto of Combarelles in France. How far early man assisted in the disappearance of the mammoths is not an easy matter accurately to determine. Baron Toll, who has studied buried glaciers of the glacial period in Siberia, comes to the conclusion that "the mammoths and the other contemporary mammals lived on the spots where we find their relics. They died out owing to a change in the physico-geographical conditions of the region. The bodies of these mammals which have not died in consequence of some sudden catastrophe were deposited in a cold region partly on river terraces and partly on the shores of lakes and on the surfaces of glaciers, and there were gradually buried in loam. They have been preserved in the same way as have been preserved the masses of ice underneath owing to a permanent, perhaps increasing cold."—Brooklyn Eagle.

To the Bobolink.

By REV. C. S. PERCIVAL.

How are you old fellow? You know me,
Though 'tis many a year since we met,
I knew you the moment I heard you;
That melody who can forget?
That rollicking, jubilant whistle,
That rolls like a brooklet along—
That sweet flageolet of the meadows,
Your bubble-ling, bobolink song!

In the beautiful vales of Oneida,
I first heard that sweet roundelay.
Which afar on the Iowa prairies,
I've pined for through many a May.
But here are the fields of Ohio:
And you've come from those valleys halfway,
To meet me and greet me still singing
Your bubble-ing, bobolink lay!

'Twas kind of you, Bobbie, to do it,
For here I must linger awhile;
And hence to the home of my childhood
Still stretches full many a mile,
And ere I had reached you, the autumn
Had banished you far to the South;
And the snow and the storm-wind had silenced
That bubble-ing, bobolink mouth.

Then sing once again the sweet ditty,
My boyhood delighted to hear;
And my laugh, though a tear must spring with it,
Will ring out in spite of the tear.
And the long silenced voices of loved ones,
And the forms on which memory dotes,
All shall live in the magical echoes
Of those bubble-ing, bobolink notes.

Do you mind, my dear Bobbie, How often
I tried to poke fun as you sang,
And mimicked your musical nasals
With my hoarse "Okeelang, Okeelang?"
But I mind how you commonly taught me
That the poked is the fellow that pokes:
For somehow, you always got round me
With those bubble-ing, bobolink jokes!

"Bobolink! Only think"—this you warbled—
 "That a chap without voice, ear or wings,
 Should venture to mimic the singing
 Of a fellow that flies as he sings!
 O, go 'long. Give it up? You can't come it!
 Chee, Chee!—what a figure he makes,
 Who apes with his hiccougging quavers
 My bubble-ing, bobolink shakes!"

But, Bobbie, how is it?—I'm puzzled.
 Come to think, it is wonderful strange,
 That you look and sing as you used to,
 While I—have you noticed the change?
 Your plumage still wears the old colors,
 While mine like a badger's has grown.
 My songs are sung out, while yours echo
 The same bubble-ing, bobolink tone!

Did your mother, the first time she saw you,
 Dip you, heels and all, into the Styx;
 And thus on her musical wonder,
 A long immortality fix?
 Or down in the South, did you drink of
 The fount Ponce sought for in vain—
 And thence is the fresh juvenescense
 Of your bubble-ing, bobolink strain?

I know not, dear Bobbie, and care not;
 For in fact I'm as young as yourself,
 For all of your juvenile antics—
 You jubilant, rollicking elf!
 The heart that possesses the power
 Beneath your wild music to thrill!
 Is as young as the heart that produces
 Your bubble-ing, bobolink trill!

But the heart, Bobbie, never gets older;
 And that's the one musical thing—
 The only thing here or in heaven,
 That ever could, can or will sing!
 And that is the reason I've lingered
 Today in this meadow so long;
 And joined my old bass in the treble
 Of your bubbe-ling, bobolink song!

[Reprinted from "Odds and Ends" by permission.]

The Red-breasted Nuthatch.*(Sitta canadensis).*

By W. H. MOORE.

Were our birds classified as are plants, according to their abilities to withstand the inclemency of our northern climate, the subject of the following sketch would rank as a hardy perennial among the avi-fauna of Eastern Canada.

Although not a bird having a well-developed song as do some of our winter birds, its voice is nevertheless well cultivated along certain lines. The ordinary notes sound like *yank* or *kugak*, and when heard at some distance, are suggestive of loneliness. There are some sweet twitterings uttered incessantly when the individuals of a family are foraging among tree tops. A noticeable flow of talk is poured forth as the mated birds are investigating and deciding upon a nesting site.

The search for the location of the nest apparently begins in the month of March. The yanking abilities are then taxed to a great extent, the birds being known to utter that call uninterruptedly for over half a minute. After the site is exactly decided upon, and work begun, the calling of the birds ceases to a great extent.

The nesting site is chosen in some decayed tree trunk, preferably that of a conifer, the second choice being white or soft maple. The birds undoubtedly understand the method of decay in trees, as the above species of trees seem to decay most near the heart, and are more easily chipped out than trunks that are decayed upon the outside and sounder toward the center. Thus, when the bark is pierced, the hardest of the mining is accomplished. Yet their work is of-

ten in vain, as they sometimes come upon knots in the wood; these they are unable to chip out, and they are obliged to choose a new site. In such instances, they evidently occupy a nest of the previous year, either one of their own species or that of a small woodpecker, as the female would be ready to lay the eggs before a new nest could be excavated. The length of time occupied in nest making is from two weeks to two months.

In one instance when the birds located in a dead maple trunk set up for them within a few feet of our own house, the birds worked alternately at mining or excavating the hole in which the nest proper was placed. The length of time one would work varied from a few minutes to thirty. Then it would call a few times, and the mate would appear upon the scene and take a shift at the work. Toward the last of the mining operations the male performed that work and the female was busily engaged in collecting material for the nest. This consisted of fine shreds of cedar bark, other fibrous material, hair and a few small feathers, and the whole was well fitted together.

The excavation had been enlarged to satisfactory dimensions, which were as follows: entrance oval, one inch by 1 1-8 in diameter, leading inward an inch and one-quarter on lower side, then downward six inches and enlarged to nearly four inches across for half the lower tunnel.

The next cavity measured one and one-half inch in diameter and depth. All chinks and cracks within the excavation, if they lead to the outside, are tightly caulked with fibrous material of the same composition as the nest.

Before the female had completed the nest, the male began carrying fir

balsam, from the trees surrounding their home, and besmeared an area about the entrance to the nest, fully four inches in diameter.

The Nuthatches we may consider our only birds which use artificial weapons for their protection. The entrance to the nests being always fortified by means of balsam, which seems to be applied for the purpose of keeping out the white-footed mouse, an omnivorous little rodent that would gladly avail himself of the opportunity of making a meal of the eggs or young birds, or drive away the old birds and use the nest for its own tenement.

The eggs of this species of Nuthatch are usually six in number, white with brownish spots, chiefly near the large end. Some sets contain eggs nearly spherical in form.

The duty of incubation is performed by the female and covers a period of twelve days. The male occasionally feeds his mate during this period, adds more balsam about the entrance to the nest, and does general picket duty about home. When hatched, the young are nude little creatures, having a very faint trace of down upon the feather tracts. At the end of a week the feathers are quite well grown, and the superciliary stripe begins to show. After the tenth day one of the young may often be seen looking out of the nest, but at the least disturbance retreats to lower quarters. At the age of two weeks the young leave the nest, and are led to pastures new; for suitable insects for their diet have been well garnered near home, and they must move to where their food is more plentiful.

Some months are devoted to the education of the young birds, who are shown where to look for food. It is interesting, indeed, to follow a family of these feathered mites, observe

their movements and listen to their talk when they all alight in the top of some spruce or fir tree, and with much twittering search among the cones and twigs. Soon all are off to another tree, and the searching and jeering go on; many insects, caterpillars and eggs of various insects are taken. No doubt, many small seeds are also eaten. Toward autumn and throughout the winter the birds are often observed upon highways, searching among the excrements dropped by horses. One specimen in the writer's collection was struck by the foot of a passing horse and killed. When night comes on a roosting place is chosen among thick grown conifers.

Thus the Red-breasted Nuthatches pass the time, and among their feathered companions are others of our hardy annual aves, such as the Black-capped and Hudsonian Chickadees, Golden-crowned Kinglet and Downy Woodpecker, the half-hardy Brown Creeper and semi-annual Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

The adults of the Red-breasted Nuthatch measure from four and one-half to four and three-quarters inches in length. Of this the tail takes up one and one-half inches and the bill one-half inch. The upper parts are leaden blue, brightest in the adult male, who has a black crown, with a white stripe over the eye, and a black stripe through the eye. The under parts are of various shades of brownish, being lightest in young birds and richest in adult males. The wings are fuscous with pale ashy edgings; the tail feathers, except the middle pair, black, the lateral, marked with white.

[Reprinted from The Ottawa Naturalist, Journal of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club, Vol. XIX, (1905). Published at Ottawa, Canada. Price \$1.00 per year, to foreign countries \$1.25.]

A Novice's Note Book—No. 6.

Virden, Illinois, May 20, 1882.—Rain crows appeared in town in the morning, before a wet day set in. It began to rain about 9 a. m.

May 21.—Found a chicken hawk's nest (Cooper's) in the maple grove. It was an old crow's nest, not very high up. The eggs, three in number, were laid on the bare sticks, and the nest was quite shallow. The old birds made no disturbance whatever. Saw a scarlet tanager in the grove, the only one I have seen this season.

Found two nests of meadow lark in an open meadow, one containing four eggs, the other six eggs, one of the six being not over half as large as the others. The nests were on the ground, beside tufts of grass, and were composed of dried grass nearly surrounded by green.

May 23.—Found a nest of the green heron in a patch of hazel bushes and scrubby trees through which the creek ran. The nest was about 60 yards from the water, in a small crab tree, and was composed of small sticks laid closely together, the middle of the structure being slightly hollow. The eggs, five in number, were of a light blue color, and were laid on the bare sticks without any lining. The old birds did not make any disturbance while I examined the nest. I heard of two other nests being found along the creek.

May 26.—Secured the nest of Baltimore oriole mentioned on May 15. I tied a rope to the limb and secured it to a limb above, and then sawed it off, letting it fall within a few feet of the ground. The female was sitting in the nest, where she remained while the limb fell and until she was caught and taken from the nest. There were two eggs, of a dark olive color, sparsely streaked with dark brown. The nest was composed of

twine, thread and fibers of bark, closely woven together, and lined very warmly with bark fibers and hair. Grass fibers were also used in making the nest.

May 28.—Saw a nighthawk flying, about an hour before sunset.

May 29.—Saw the nighthawk flying in the morning, about an hour before sunrise. It alighted on the ground, where it sat for a long time, as if asleep, and I left it undisturbed.

June 4.—Found a nest of phoebe bird, under a bridge. It was made of mud, moss, bark fibers and grass, and lined with hair and wool. It contained five eggs, white, unspotted, embryos nearly developed. The egg of the phoebe bird is sometimes spotted faintly with brown or reddish brown.

June 11.—The favorite resort of the indigo bird is the topmost branch of some tree, where it sits and warbles forth its notes. One I have noticed has a particular branch upon which it sits and sings. Cedar birds have been around in flocks for the past two days, but they do not scatter out.

June 25.—Found a nest of the chicken hawk (Cooper's), containing three young ones and one egg just ready to hatch. The young were covered with white down. The old birds made no disturbance while the nest was examined.

Found a nest of the green heron with one young bird. It was standing up in the nest, and presented a very comical appearance. It climbed around over the tree clinging by its claws, sometimes head downward. The nest was in an apple orchard, over a quarter of a mile from the creek.

July 19.—Blackbirds now flocking together.

August 13.—Nighthawks beginning to fly over. They begin to fly about an hour before sunset, and continue

until dark. All of them fly toward the southeast or east.

August 20.—Found an old nest today, in a hedge, up near the top, in a fork of an upright branch. It was composed entirely of the soft silken seeds of the thistle, woven together into a shallow cup, and glued to the branch in some manner. I do not know what bird it belonged to. (Very likely readers will identify it as that of the goldfinch. P. M. S.) Goldfinches are now having a gay time, swinging on the heads of the thistle, and scattering the downy seeds in all directions.

Sept. 3.—Nighthawks still continue to fly overhead. Notes made Aug. 13 state that all fly southeast or east. This is a mistake, as I have later seen them flying north and northeast. On cloudy days they appear earlier in the afternoon.

Sept. 9.—A dabchick was seen on a pond near town.

Sept. 13.—Nighthawks flying about for the last time.

Oct. 11.—Cool and cloudy, having the appearance of snow. Snowbirds (junco) appeared on their return from the north. Saw a pair of white-eyed vireos in company with a flock of sparrows along a hedge. Crows go to the grove every night to roost. Sometimes straggling and sometimes in a large company.

Lewistown, Mont.

P. M. SILLOWAY.

Late Nesting of the Hummingbird.

The recent article in the *Oologist* relative to the nesting of the Hummingbird calls to mind a nest which I examined in 1904. On August 20 it contained 2 hatching eggs. Built 10 feet up on horizontal hemlock limb and very deep. Place, Washington County, Md. This is the latest rec-

ord I have of this bird's nesting. I do not believe that these birds rear two broods this far north.

Also examined a Goldfinch's nest on Sept. 23, which contained 3 fresh eggs. The usual time for fresh eggs here, (Mont. Co., Pa.), is July 25 to Aug. 30, but this is my latest date.

R. C. HARLOW.

EDITORIAL.

We have seen no copy of "American Ornithology," since July-August issue (double number), and we now hear that, owing to complications with Post Office Department, Friend Reed has suspended publication indefinitely. Let us hope that he will get matters straightened up soon and resume.

We are in receipt of copy, "Notes on Wisconsin Mollusca," from the author, G. H. Chadwick, formerly with Ward's Nat. Science Est., Milwaukee Public Museum, etc., and now State zoologist of New York.

It is a strictly technical list of all Wisconsin shells found by or authentically reported to the author, gotten up in pamphlet form of 32 pp.

It enumerates 115 species, mostly positively identified, and must prove of great value to all interested in the shells of Wisconsin and surrounding localities.

We reprint Percival's Bobolink Song from Davies' "Odds and Ends," in this issue. We intended to use this with an exhaustive article on Bobolink by Prescott, but owing to delay in getting half-tone to use with it, we are forced to leave it for next month.

Through the courtesy of S. R. Morse, Curator of the Museum, we have received a copy of the 1905 Report of the State Museum of New Jersey.

The report consists mainly of the "Fishes of New Jersey," by Henry W. Fowler.

This work of 580 pp., gives scientific and vernacular name, description and habitat in New Jersey limits of all the fish known to occur in the state or along its coast. Contains over 200 cuts, 103 of which are full page plates. It is of great value, not only to residents of New Jersey, but all along the North Atlantic Seaboard.



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FRANK H. LATTIN,

Albion, N. Y.

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VOL. XXIII. No. 11.

ALBION, N. Y., NOV., 1906.

WHOLE No. 232

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Remember we must be notified if you wish paper discontinued and all arrearages must be paid.

207 your subscription expired	Oct. 1904
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233 " " " "	Dec., 1906
257 " " " "	Dec., 1908

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THE OÖLOGIST.

VOL. XXIII. No. 11.

ALBION, N. Y., Nov., 1906.

WHOLE No. 232

THE OÖLOGIST,

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Chill, Monroe Co., N. Y.

Bobolink.

ICTERIDÆ. Blackbirds, Orioles, Etc. A. O. U. No. 494. Dolichonyx oryzivorus.

The Bobolink, or as it is some times called, the May-bird, Meadow-bird, Butter-bird, Skunk-bird, or

American Ortolan, is a very interesting bird to study, having a wide spreading geographical distribution, extending from the central portions of South America as far north as the 54th parallel, and west to the plains of Utah. From the extreme southern point of their winter habitations, they commence their northern journeys early in April and making its appearance in Northern U. S. about the middle of May.

Its length is about 7 or 8 inches. In the early summer the male is black, with a light-yellow patch on the upper neck, also on the edges of the wings and tail feathers. Rump and upper wings splashed with white. Middle of the back is streaked with pale buff. Tail feathers have pointed tips.

The female is dull yellow-brown, with light and dark dashes on wings and tail. Two decided dark stripes on top of the head. She resembles the female English Sparrow but more slender and lighter color effect. Legs long, slender and pale colored.

About the first of June they begin to build their nest, which is usually on the ground, rarely elevated in tuft of grass, generally in a meadow, and concealed so well among the standing grass that it is very difficult to discover, until the grass has been cut.

The female is very wary in leaving or in returning to her nest, always alighting upon the ground or raising at a distance from it. The male bird, too, if the nest is approached, seeks to decoy the intruder off by his anxiety over a spot remote from the object of his solicitude.

The nest is of the simplest description, made usually of a few flexible stems of grasses carefully interwoven into a shallow and frail nest.

The eggs, five in number, are laid about the middle of June. Have a dull white ground, in some tinged with a light drab, in others olive. They are generally spotted and blotched over the entire egg with a rufous-brown; intermingled with lavender. They are often pointed at one end, sometimes nearly round, and measure from about .55 x .79 to .66 x .90. The average is about .63 x .85 of an inch. They have but one brood in a season.

In some eggs, especially those found in more northern localities, the ground-color is drab, with a strong tinge of purple. Over this is diffused a series of obscure lavender color, and then overlying these are larger and bolder blotches of wine-colored brown. In a few eggs, long and irregular lines of dark purple, so deep as to be undistinguishable from black are added.

From June 12th to July 1st, the brood hatches. Then the male is very busy feeding them. Their food is largely insectivorous: grasshoppers, crickets, beetles, spiders, with seeds for variety. When the brood is quite large they are compelled to shift for themselves. This occurs about the 15th of July.

The song of the male is musical, rippling, and jolly; the birds cease singing at the close of the nesting season.

About the first of August the male changes his bright coat for one like that of its mate. About September 1st, journeying south, they are shot for the table in Pennsylvania, under the name of reed-birds.

In late autumn they appear in the cultivated fields of rice in South Car-

olina and Georgia. They are here known as rice birds and do great damage to the rice crops. While recent investigations in the south have disclosed the gratifying fact that they devour, in immense numbers the larvae of the cotton worm, which so frequently threatens the entire cotton crop of the south.

From here they go to their distant winter quarters, south of the Amazon river, stopping a while in the West Indies, and living on a grass called the guinea-grass.

C. S. PRESCOTT,
Lynn, Mass.

Four is often a complete set of Bobolink. The rare nests that are found elevated from the ground a few inches in tufts of grass are much more bulky in construction. The typical ground nest can hardly be picked up owing to its frailness.

The nests of the Bobolink are among the most elusive of Oological desiderata.

One morning early in June (can't give exact date as it was before I began keeping notes, but about June 2, 1889, would be close), the Editor stepped into a thin meadow of short June grass at just sunrise and on walking through it, noticed that some birds had left plain tracks in the dew on the short grass.

Out of pure curiosity, I followed up one trail and found a nest of Bobolink containing 5 eggs. By following other similar trails, I secured six sets of four and five eggs each.

All the birds had left the nests at the warning cry of the males when I stepped into the field and ran on the ground from 20 to 50 feet before flying to the fence.

I have never found conditions just right to locate them this way since.

They usually nest in new clover-



Photo by L. S. Horton.

Nest and Eggs of Bobolink.

meadows of heavy growth where this is not practical.

Some have reported success by dragging a rope and some by using a good dog. The ever solicitous male bird has already beaten me at these tricks.

In their feeding habits this bird is an anomaly. Almost entirely insectivorous from the beginning of their northern sojourn to July 10th, they then become destructive grain eaters, ruining large quantities of the soft ripening wheat in the north and using the southern rice fields even worse.—Editor.

The Little Green Heron.

This handsome small Heron is frequently found in the neighborhood of

Buffalo. It arrives from the south in the latter part of April and during the first week in May. It does not seem to assemble in large colonies like the Great Blue Heron. In a small strip of woods near marshy ground or along the creeks you can find a pair or two. This spring was an exception. In one locality we located about 12 or 15 nests in a woods covering about 10 acres of ground. The nests are loose affairs. A few small twigs to form a platform so that the handsome pale blue eggs can be easily seen from below. They build their nests from 5 to 25 feet from the ground. The accompanying picture was taken of a nest about 5 feet from the ground. They are some times very difficult to get, the saplings not being sufficiently strong to carry the

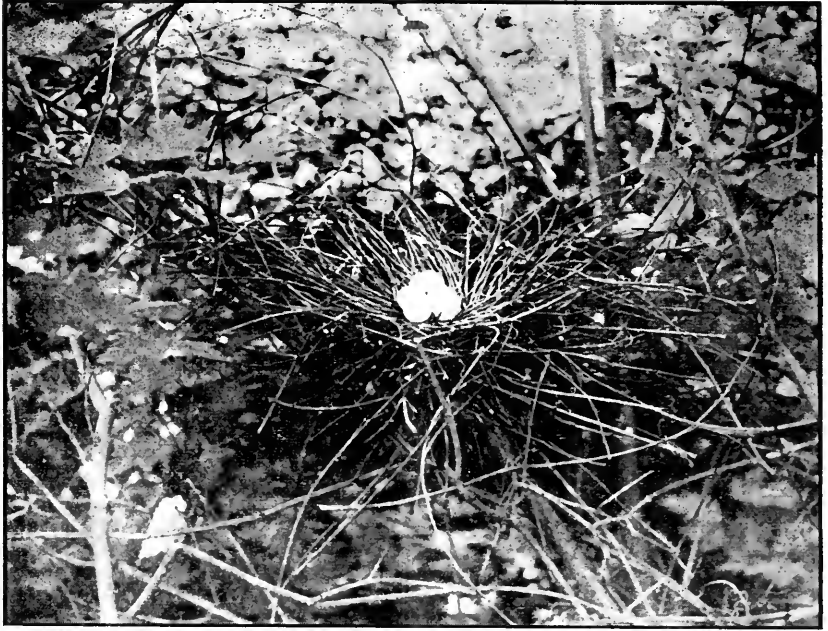


Photo by Reinecke.
Nest and Eggs of Green Heron.

weight of a young Oologist. We have taken sets of 4, 5 and 6 eggs. They nest very irregularly.

On June 16th, we found a perfect fresh set of five eggs, and within 20 feet of this nest we found a nest with 4 eggs highly incubated. Both of the old birds have to hustle to supply their young with food. When disturbed they utter a coarse quak which can be heard some distance away. It is a novel sight to see the fledglings stand in the nest with ever hungry and open mouths. We intend to take a nest of young to Buffalo and give it to the Zoo. They must be easy to keep there. All the Great Blue Herons in the Buffalo Park Zoo have been donated by us.

ED. REINECKE,
Buffalo, N. Y.

The Bobolink.

In Canada, especially in this locality, the Bobolink is an abundant breeder. The birds arrive here from the south about May 10th, the females generally being a few days behind the males. During the last week in the month the birds commence to build their nests in clover fields or damp meadows, and by the 3d or 4th of June a full set of eggs has been laid; the usual number being from 4 to 6.

Probably few egg collectors are aware of the fact that the best time to find Bobolinks' nests is between the hours of 7:30 p. m. and midnight. All ornithologists reading this may smile, but our experience up here has taught us that the above asser-

tion is correct. Very few of the females are sitting in the daytime, especially if the weather be fine and bright, and it is practically a hopeless task to locate the nests by flushing the bird. Wait until the males have stopped singing for the night, and make sure that the females have retired. You should have a lantern with you, and when you flush the female it is an easy matter to find the nest. We have taken as many as 13 sets in two evenings by following this method. By walking up and down a pasture, covering as much of the ground as you can, you are sure to flush the bird at your feet.

W. J. BROWN,
Westmount, Que.

Western Lark Sparrow.

(*Chondestes grammacus strigatus*.)

I have been much interested of late in the short notes which have been appearing from time to time in the Oologist with regard to the lark sparrow—lark finch, as old Dr. Cooper calls it, of the eastern states.

To me the western form of this sparrow has always been one of the most interesting of the small birds which, during the breeding season, inhabit the hills of Southern California. During the winter great flocks of these sparrows make local migrations to the lowlands, and are then not uncommon about barnyards and along roadsides, where weeds furnish them with seed food in abundance.

They are easily known from all the other sparrows of the region (white crowns, Gambel's western chipping, western field, Heerman's and Samuel's song, etc., etc.), by the white border to the longer feathers of the tail. These, as soon as the sparrow rises in flight, spread out in a perfect fan, with a border of purest white

visible as far as the observer will care to identify them.

At all seasons of the year, the western lark sparrow is a very tame bird, ready and willing to hop aside from the road to let you pass and no more, so that if you are gentle with him in the roadways to the barn and down through the orange orchard your chances of getting quite well acquainted with him are most excellent as far as his disposition is concerned.

During the breeding season, which begins in the first part of April, and ends rather indefinitely during July or August, the birds are a trifle more wary.

At this time of the year they mingle with the Mexican Horned Larks (*Otocoris alpestris chrysolaema*) out on the mesas and along the slopes of the adobe hills. They never seem to become really familiar with the larks, merely mingling among them in scattered pairs, where the hills present suitable conditions for their nest-making.

Mexican Horned Larks will build their nest in a cow or horse track out on the level mesa with not a weed or a shrub near, but the lark sparrows as a rule, prefer the shelter of a shrub, where their home is not so likely to get tramped on by wandering cattle or even by people passing to and fro.

The lark sparrow, however does not nest on the ground from preference, but solely from necessity. Around the ranches, where these interesting birds are becoming more common every year, they choose forks in the branches of orange, lemon, peach, pear, apricot, apple, almond and prune trees. I have never found a nest of this sparrow in pepper, cypress or walnut trees, though these are as common throughout the farming section of

Southern California, as are those mentioned as common nesting sites.

The nest itself is one of the best made by any sparrow of the southwest, especially when built in trees; on the ground so much care is not exercised. First of all a strong outer cup is made, composed of fine root-lets or bark fibers. This is often as much as an inch thick. Inside this there is a second cup, the real nest, which is made of the finest of grass blades and dead leaves of all the finer-leaved weeds. This, in turn, is carefully lined with shreds of dry grasses. Seldom are feathers or horse-hair used, though the Western Chipping Sparrow, nesting in the same locality, often in the identical tree, with the Lark Sparrows, makes its nest almost entirely from the loot of stable posts and cow stanchions.

It requires from five days to a week and a half for the lark sparrows, a pair working together, to finish such a home. Then, as a rule, two days elapses before the first egg is laid. After that first egg, one each day appears until the full quota, usually four, are in the nest. In rare occasions five eggs are laid, some times, when the first set has been destroyed, or when the birds are a very old pair, only three eggs furnishes the full complement.

These eggs are well described, both by Davie and by Reed in their books on North American birds' eggs. They are of a clouded blue-gray white in ground color, dotted with remarkably round dots and lined with wofully crooked lines of brown, so deep at times as to almost seem black. When fresh, the yellow yolk, showing through the thin shell, gives to the egg a most beautiful pinkish tinge, but when blown they become the common dead dull color of all such eggs in the collector's cabinet.

Los Angeles, Cal.

HARRY H. DUNN.

Probably Was Scared Away.

Dear Mr. Short:—

On the eleventh day of April, 1906, three young girls were gathering greens and found a bird's nest with three eggs in it. They took them home and punched a hole in each end and blowed them and then one of the lot thought they would tell me of their adventure as egg collectors. I made inquiries and found they were some species of snipe or plover. I succeeded in getting the remaining shells, and while they may be Killdeer eggs, they do look very much like a set of Wilson's plover which I have. I have never been able to find any other of the snipe or plover family breeding here except Killdeer, Bartramian Sandpiper and Woodcock, but have been told by old hunters that the so-called Jack Snipe used to lay here in an early day. Do you think you would be able to tell positively whether they are Killdeer eggs? If so, I will send them for your inspection, for really I am unable to determine positively, as the girls claim they saw no bird of any kind and I got one of them to show me where they found them.

The following is a description of nest and surroundings. Nest on a small mound of slack coal and slate 400 feet south of air shaft at coal mine, which was running every day and within 135 feet of B. & O. S. W. R. R. main track, where about 18 or 20 trains pass daily. Nest was a depression in center of the little mound which was probably not over one foot high. Size of cavity—Depth, 1 1-2 inches; diameter, 5 inches. Eggs laid on a few slate shales size of thumb nail and smaller and a few bits of decayed weed stems. Nest was in plain view as no vegetation was growing for 100 yards or more away from it.

Girls claim eggs were cold and as far as they noticed were fresh.

C. B. VANDERCOOK.

[As several of our migrating shore birds have been known to deposit eggs during migration. I thought it best to see these eggs before passing opinion. They proved to be Killdeer of an extremely dark type. Owing to unusual nesting site, we print this in full, Eggs of Yellowlegs, Wilson's Snipe and what were believed to be Solitary Sandpiper have been found deposited in Great Lake regions and northward by migrating birds, but as far as I know they have been usually single eggs.—*Ed.*]

The Bittern's Method.

Editor The Oologist:—

Dear Sir:—In the September Oologist, Mr. Edward Reinecke states that the American Bittern places its beak in the water when making its peculiar call. I think he must be mistaken. I have been close to them a number of times when making this cry—"pumping"—and the bird has held its neck and beak erect, almost vertical, moving the neck and head at each cry.

Some times when uttering it's call the bird was standing on dry land.

Respt. yours,

D. D. STONE,

Oswego, N. Y.

Unusual York State Records.

Nov. 2, 1906—Snow banks in patches on sides of knolls and in hollows. 5 p. m. saw a large, pure white Snowy Owl (*Nyctea nyctea*), alight in middle of wheat field.

Secured gun and approached within 400 feet. Bird was certainly wallowing around in the mud, picking off blades of the green wheat. Could

not prove that he swallowed them, but it looked that way. Owing to it being sunset, the bird could see me well and would not allow nearer approach.

Took flight and dropped in midst of snow bank in adjoining field. Evidently thought he was protected by color, as he allowed me to approach within 300 feet this time. Still too far away for an effective shot with only No. 6 shot.

I noted positively this time that the bird was pure white except the mud stains on belly and legs. I designate the bird by male pronoun, as I believe the pure white specimens to be almost invariably males.

Nov. 12 and 13, 1906, third snow storm this fall. Four inches of snow on morning of 13th.

Heard two Snowflakes, (*Passerina nivalis*), on evening of 12th and saw small flock flying south on morning of 13th.

Monroe Co., N. Y.,

E. H. SHORT.

Publications Received.

Mineral Collector, Vol. XIII, No. 6. Contains much interesting matter including good half-tone likeness of the late Prof. H. A. Ward and the continuation of "Mineral Localities Around Philadelphia."

Bulletin Div. Zoology Penn., Dept. Agri., Vol. IV, No. 2.

"Am. Botanist," Vol. II, No. 2.

"Philatelic West," Vol. XXXIV, No. 2.

"Amateur Naturalist," Vol. III, No. 6.

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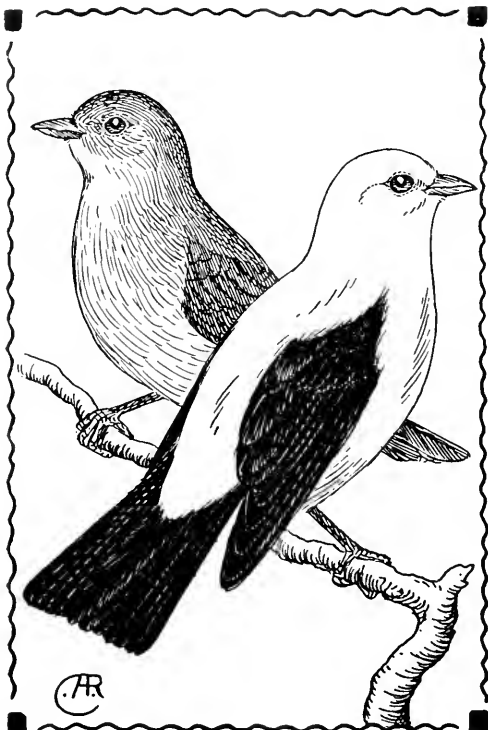
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In Correction.

In Mr. Miller's article on Long-bill Marsh Wren appearing August and September issues—see page 117, 10th line for "along" read "above;" page 122, 25th line, for "days" read "hours;" page 123, for "Mrs. Clarence J. Hunt," read "Mr. Chreswell J. Hunt."



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Razor-billed Auk.....	15
White-wing Dove.....	04
Roseate Tern.....	08
Ring-billed Gull.....	12
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VOL. XXIII. No. 12.

ALBION, N. Y., DEC., 1906.

WHOLE No. 233

Take Notice.

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Remember we must be notified if you wish paper discontinued and all arrearages must be paid.

207	your subscription expired	Oct. 1904
203	"	Dec. 1904
233	your subscription expires with this issue	
245	"	Dec., 1907
257	"	Dec., 1908

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VOL. XXIII. No. 11

ALBION, N. Y., DEC., 1906.

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ERNEST H. SHORT, Editor and Manager,
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The Home of the Great Blue Heron.

We have had in the neighborhood of Buffalo within a radius of 50 miles, three heronries, one containing three or four nests, which has since been deserted, the location being too near frequented highways, the other had from twelve to fifteen nests, but the

surrounding low country having been drained, made the locality an undesirable place for the Herons.

Here their nests were placed in high pines, since cut down. I undertook to climb one of these, 75 feet up a 4-foot through pine. When the first limb was encountered, I had to force my way through the heavy needled twigs, 115 feet from the ground, and was rewarded with two fine eggs. The exertion was so great, that I did not undertake another climb. This was on May 1st, 1898 in the Cherry Creek locality. The previous year the farmers had made a rail on the young because of their destruction to the trout fry which were planted in a small stream nearby and shot all within reach and threw them in a pile to rot.

I have heard since that the Herons have left this section.

The third, now existing heronry, is about 50 miles from Buffalo in Orleans county, and being afraid that a similar fate might overtake it, concluded to make several trips to it during the breeding season.

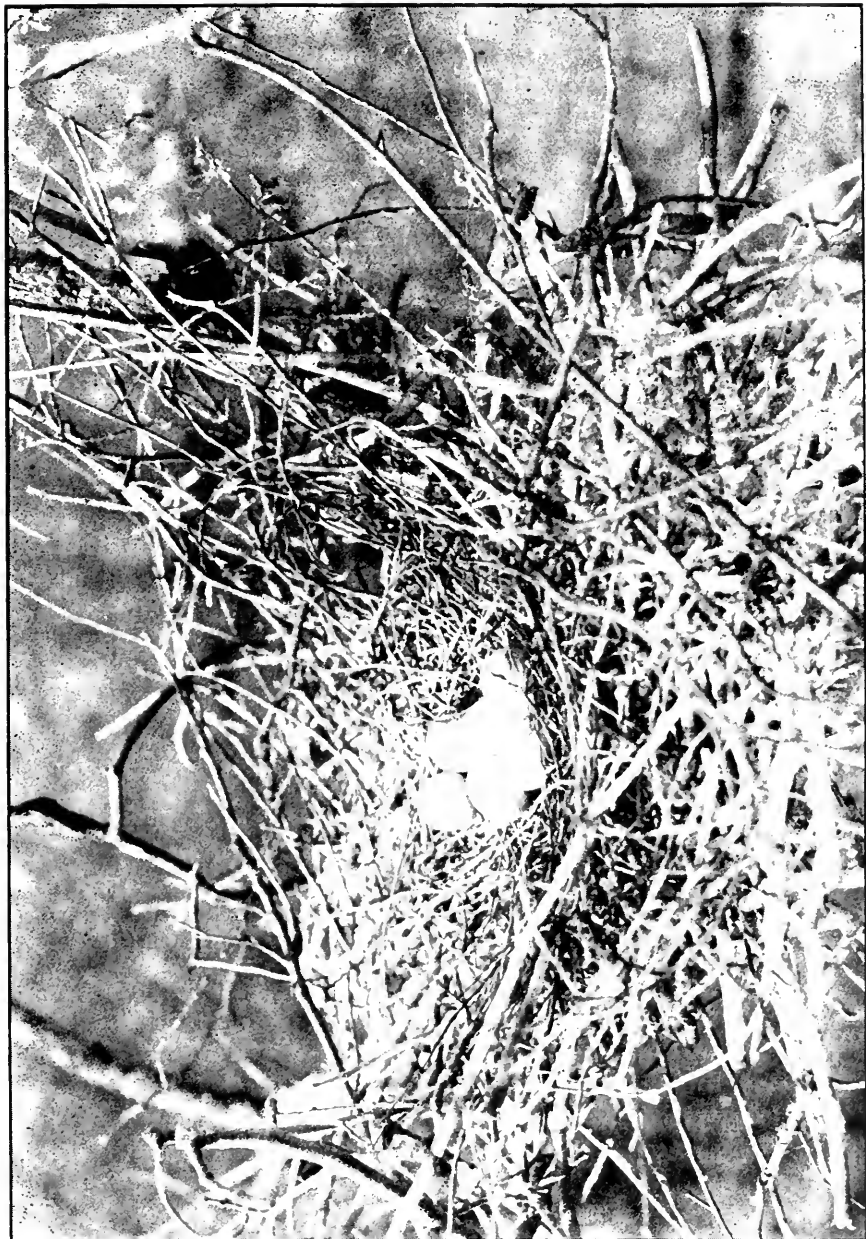
This locality is almost inaccessible. The large swamp encircling it, will not be drained for some years to come. The surrounding farming population is waiting for the state authorities to do it, and this being a very expensive undertaking and the state not directly benefitted by doing so, may be a far off problem.

The conditions are entirely different from those of the two vacated heronries. The trees are entirely high old elms and ash. A few years ago we saw one very large elm which had eleven nests. This tree was blown



Photo by Reinecke.

The Male Great Blue Heron Surveys the Heronry.



Set of Six Eggs Gt. Blue Heron in Situ 100 Feet From Ground.

Photo by Reinecke.



Photo by Reinecke. A Nest Full of Young Great Blue Herons, June 24, 1936.

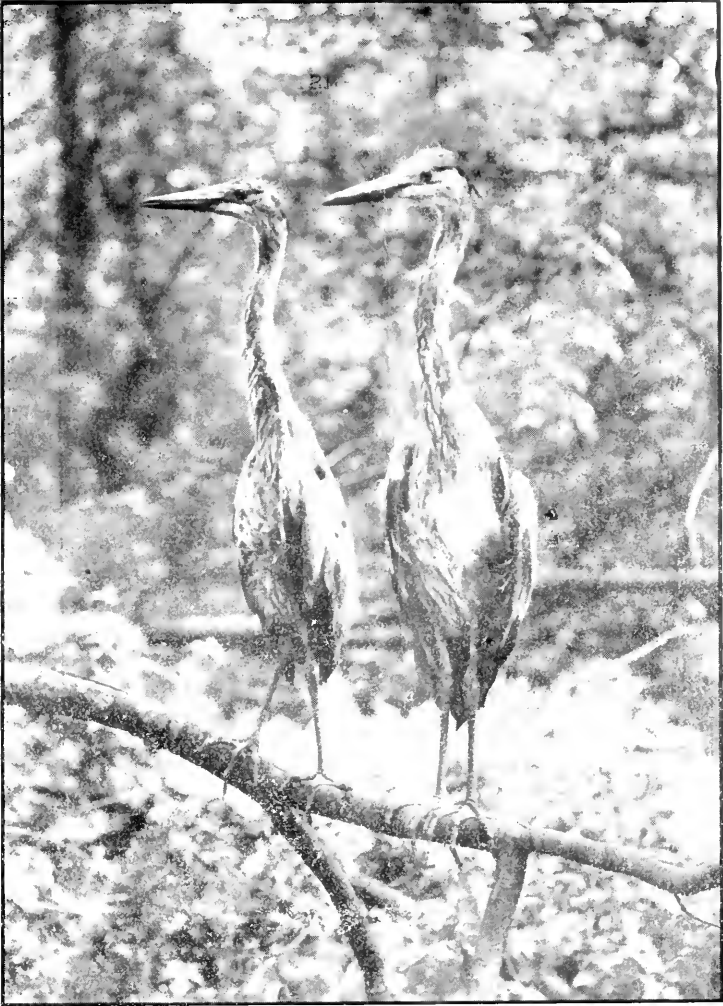


Photo by Reinecke.

Young Great Blue Herons Posing.

down during a heavy gale. At that time the number of nests were estimated at about 150. It takes a great deal of enthusiasm to visit this heronry.

When we arrived at the nearest railroad station, which is five miles

from the heronry, the obliging hotel keeper supplied us with a commodious two-stated rig, drawn by a high-stepper of a horse. When starting, all occupants of the hotel were watching us. The beast had a way of jumping on all fours, until we found



Photo by Reinecke.

A Near View Almost Fully Grown.

out that he was totally blind. It was quite an ordeal for the driver, because I had to keep my eyes constantly on him, instead of taking part in the animated discussion of my partners. But we finally got there. We put up at the nearest farm house, the men of which acted very nice to us, going with us and carrying part of our heavy camera, etc. We had to use rubber hip boots, but all of us, notwithstanding the care we took, several times went down in the water beyond the tops of our boots. Then the constant climb-

ing over the fallen trees in water-soaked clothes, is more than pleasure.

The Great Blue Herons arrive from the southern states in the latter part of March and soon look for their old nesting sites, picking out the highest elms or pines. This is shown in my first picture, where a male Heron surveys the surrounding trees from the highest point.

They invariably return to their former roosts, look them over critically and repair and clean them up for the happy family. In the meantime they

make extended trips to satisfy their ravenous appetites, and fly as far as 50 miles or more to feeding grounds, because the immediate neighborhood cannot supply them with nourishment.

When returning from their foraging trips, they utter a loud croaking, also when disturbed in the Heronry, they fly restlessly overhead and croak their disapproval to the intruders.

The nests are large bulky affairs, three to four feet wide and according to long occupancy, from twelve to eighteen inches thick, adding to them every season, constructed of stout twigs, lined with bark strips, invariably in the highest elms, as high as 100 or 120 feet.

Such a nest would be an interesting object in the collection of an enthusiastic Oologist.

About the middle of April everything is in good shape for the future family. In our Books on Birds, it is claimed that they lay from 3 to 4 eggs, which does not tally with our experience. We found mostly sets of five and several of 6 eggs—all of a handsome light green color, although we have a set of four eggs in our collection of a perfect white color.

It is no easy task to climb these trees, which are very often from 80 to 120 feet high, and more than 3 feet in diameter with a rough 1 1-2 inch thick bark, where the spurs of climbing irons can hardly find a footing. After hard work, getting up about 50 feet, the bark gets thinner and smoother, and here the progress is easier.

It is no pleasant undertaking to climb these high elms and place the camera at least ten feet higher than the nest in order to get a good picture. It can be easily seen that some of those high branches are dry and with the additional weight of the climber and camera, easily break.

When below the nests, the slightest disturbance brings a shower of chalky excrement over you, and, if any of that stuff gets in your eyes, a heap of rubbing is necessary to remove it.

Long before this the female Heron has left the nest and flies in wide circles over the top of the woods, joined by its mate, croaking defiance to the intruder.

When about 10 feet higher than the nest, a strong cord is let down for the camera. A suitable place is now picked out, camera adjusted and some exposures are made. In some cases it is more difficult to come down again than it was to climb up, but to be rewarded with a good picture, repays for all the trouble.

The first two pictures were taken April 29th. About a month later we paid the heronry another visit but did not attempt to climb the tall elms.

June 24th, about two months later than our first visit, we found everything in good condition. The young were almost fully developed. They generally are able to leave the nest the first week in July. It was quite difficult to take good pictures, the foliage being very thick by this time. But we finally succeeded. After taking the third picture we managed to get one set of young out of the nest. It was a difficult piece of work, as they clung tenaciously to every branch within their reach. The fourth picture shows the result of hard work and the fifth picture is that of the young heron.

They are exceedingly difficult and dangerous to handle, striking with their sharp bill at the eyes of its captor. We concluded to bring two of them to Buffalo alive, which are now objects of curiosity to the visitors at the Zoo in the Park.

Mostly all of the Zoos in the United

States have been supplied with Herons from this heronry, and when properly fed, live for quite a number of years. In bringing them home we were obliged to acquire a bag of a kind farmer, who would not accept any pay for it. The thrusts with their sharp bills were dangerous. The Herons of this section only raise one brood, while the southern states claim two broods. When boating on the Niagara River, they can be seen standing motionless in the water, watching for the finny tribe, when, with lightning speed, the long neck and bill goes down and captures a fish; and to think that they have to make a 40 or 50-mile flight with it to their hungry offspring. Frogs and snakes are also a prey to their appetites.

This trip was very interesting to all that took part.

Any farther particulars will be gladly given.

EDWARD REINECKE,

400 Elm St.,

Buffalo, N. Y.

The Great Blue Heron lays, as do other birds, larger sets of smaller eggs in the northern states. Southern sets run 3 and 4 usually and average of large size.—Ed.

WILD PIGEONS IN MICHIGAN.

Birds Return to North Woods After Thirty Years' Absence.

(Special to Chicago Record-Herald.)

Munising, Mich., Oct. 20.—Reports from various localities in the Lake Superior region would indicate that after an absence of thirty years wild pigeons—also called Passenger Pigeons because of their conspicuous habit of passing from one part of the country to the other in immense flocks, sometimes clouding the sun in flight—are coming back to the forests of the "north country."

Just where these pretty birds of passage have kept themselves for a third of a century is not known, but the

general supposition is that they have been breeding in the wooded and unsettled regions of South America. Woodsmen report hundreds of them along the Cloquet River in Minnesota, and colonies have also appeared, it is said, in the Wisconsin woods north of Spooner, in the vicinity of Lake Superior. Last spring a flock was seen in Presque Isle Park, at Marquette, by the caretaker, who, when a young man, had killed many of the birds, and he recognized the species at once.

Many middle-aged and elderly men remember the old days on the farm in Michigan, Wisconsin or elsewhere in the great lakes region when these birds were so thick that a boy could kill hundreds of them in a day with no better weapon than a club. In those days trapping the birds for market was a regular business with a large number of men. The birds were served at hotels and restaurants in the cities and were regarded as a great delicacy. In fact, so great a hold did this food have on the public palate that squab raising has been a profitable business since the departure of the wild species years ago.

[Again we get rumors of the occurrence of the Passenger Pigeon. Have any of the "Oologist's" readers anything definite to add?—Ed.]

FIND FOSSIL REMAINS OF ANTIDILUVIAN MONSTER

Expedition Returns from Rocky Mountains with Nearly Two Carloads of Extinct Species of Animals.

New York, Oct. 26.—Three big expeditions of the American Museum of Natural History arrived from the Rocky Mountain regions, after several months' rough work, bringing nearly two carloads of petrified skeletons of about 500 animals, mostly new to science, and which lived on earth from one and a half to eight million years ago. Among the many rare finds and which caused considerable speculation and excitement among the scientists at the museum, were two dinosaurs new to science, one of which was of huge proportions, bearing some resemblance to the great creature known as Triceratops.

The expeditions were conducted under Professor Henry Fairfield Osborn, paleontologist of the museum and of the governments of the United States

and Canada and first vice-president of the museum. The expedition to the Washakie Basin, in Southern Wyoming, was in charge of Professor Walter Granger; to the Laramie formation in Eastern Central Montana, in charge of Professor Barnum Brown; to the Black Hills, in charge of Professor Albert Thompson.

Professor Brown said: "We got a skeleton of the *clausaur*, or spoonbill dinosaur, except the limbs, and enough parts of other skeletons to restore the animal complete as in life. Heretofore, the femur was lacking and scientists can now have their first complete view of it. We also found a very complete skull of a crocodile new to science. We obtained parts of skeletons of *ornithomimus*, a small, bird-like dinosaur."

LARGEST OF MAMMALS.

Professor Walter Granger said: "We found the skeleton of the largest mammal living at the time, and for which we made careful search. This huge mammal was known as *loxlodipodon*, a mixture of elephant and rhinoceros. It had six horns—two enormous ones in the back of the skull, two smaller ones over the eyes and two rudimentary horns on the tip of the nose. We obtained an interesting lot of the skeletons of the *titanothere*s, a smaller animal than the last; numerous specimens of carnivores, including the largest of the times, the *mesonyx*; many rodents, or squirrel-like mammals; some of the earlier camel-like, even-toed, hoofed mammals; an *achendon*, one of the very large, even-toed animals, with pig-like teeth and feet, and an early primate like the *lemurs*, *notharctus*. In all we obtained 100 species in the Washakie Basin, 100 in the Bridges Basin and 40 in the Wasatch Basin."

Professor W. K. Gregory summarized the results of the Thompson expedition as follows: "We operated on the great rim of the Miocene exposures in the Black Hills, obtaining seven big cases of bones of more than 150 species. We found the two-pair toed animals dominant. The most dominant was the *merycochoerus*, with ruminating teeth, like the antelope, and feet like a pig, animals about the size of sheep. We got skeletons of ancestral primitive horses, camels, of all sizes, harmless rhinoceroses, several carnivorous ani-

mals, dogs, saber-toothed tigers, weasel-like rodents and very many turtles. The evidence all showed that the two-toed animals, in a way a modern fauna, had crowded out the three-toed animals of the older orders in the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest."

EDITORIAL.

While collecting birds' eggs last summer, I found a nest about one-half of a foot from the ground in a small shrub—a small nest and looked much like that of an Oriole, but much smaller. The bird was about the size of a House Wren and the same color on the back, but a light cream color on the breast. The egg is about the size of a Phoebe, five in number. It is white with small specks of brown around the large end. Could you tell me what the name of this bird is?

Yours truly,

CLARENCE HOARD.

Ans. Probably a low nest of white-eyed vireo.—Ed.

Is the Loggerhead Shrike found as far west as Hennepin county, Minn., or does the sub-species, White-rump, occur? Please let me know. Thanking you in advance.

R. F. M.

Ans. This matter of a dividing line between these two species is somewhat arbitrary, as the forms mix to some extent along their border line. For our convenience we draw a line from Southern Connecticut westerly through Southern New York, Northwestern Pennsylvania, Northern Ohio, straight across to the Rockies.

Hennepin County, Minn., would be White-rumped without question. The forms unquestionably intergrade in Southern New York, Northern Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa and Nebraska.—Ed.

"Condor," Vol. VIII, No. 6, at hand. Good as usual. Brother Grinnell replies to Prof. Montgomery on "Egg Collecting" in a spirited manner.

He has echoed many of our thoughts and presented some new ideas in happy form.

The Finley-Bohman article (illustrated), on California Condor is "out-of-sight."

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